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Mukkarin Wirojchoochut

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Reading Power in Thai Young Adult Realistic Fiction:
Understanding Ethnicity, Class, and Gender

A Dissertation Presented

by

MUKKARIN WIROJCHOOCHUT

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirement for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2020

College of Education

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by

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Approved as to style and content by:

Maria José Botelho, Chair

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DEDICATION

แต่ชาวเหนือ ชาวอีสาน ชาวใต้ และกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ต่างๆ ในประเทศไทยที่ประสบการณ์ชีวิตของพวกเขา
ท่านได้สร้างแรงบันดาลใจให้ข้าพเจ้าปรารถนาที่จะรู้จักพวกเขามากยิ่งขึ้น ทั้งในโลกแห่งความเป็นจริงและ
โลกแห่งวรรณกรรม

This dissertation is dedicated to all ethnoregional and ethnic groups whose
lived experience inspire me to learn more about them in the real world and fictional
world.

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I started my PhD journey in Fall 2014. My mother passed away just four days after I traveled to Amherst and was still busy looking for a place to move in. I felt a deep sadness for the loss of my beloved mother, and really wanted to go home to be close to her for the last time. However, my siblings comforted me and told me not to worry about anything since they would do the best for our mother. They would wait for me to come back to Thailand to scatter the ashes of our beloved mother over the river together. Then, I decided to stay in Amherst throughout the academic year and was looking forward to flying home after Spring 2015 ended. The first year of my PhD journey was hard and gloomy, but the power of my family's love finally encouraged me to endure this difficult time. I would like to thank Kedsarin, Sawarin, and Pattarin, my three beloved sisters who have been continuously supporting me in many ways up to the completion of my degree. I am certain that our parents and our eldest sister are proudly watching over us from heaven. Also, I would like to express my gratitude to Uncle Yot and Auntie Pitsawong who are taking care of me and my sisters like Father and Mother.

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was cowritten with Dr. Masha K. Rudman, introduced me to critical multicultural analysis while I was in Thailand. This book inspired me to work with her. I would like to express a great deal of gratitude for her expertise, attentiveness, guidance, and support that made this dissertation possible. I am very impressed with her patience, flexibility, and gentle manner which always made me feel comfortable whenever I discussed any issues with her. In addition, she provided me with opportunities to participate in many academic experiences which complemented my scholarship. I really appreciate all the hard work she has done to support my doctoral studies.

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Lastly, I wish to express my gratitude to the Valaya Alongkorn Rajabhat University and the Thai government for creating and funding this opportunity for me to carry out my doctoral studies at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. After the degree completion, I look forward to resuming my work with students at the Valaya Alongkorn Rajabhat University.

Goodbye, UMass Amherst! I will always miss you.

ABSTRACT

READING POWER IN THAI YOUNG ADULT REALISTIC FICTION:

UNDERSTANDING ETHNICITY, CLASS, AND GENDER

MAY 2020

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Books that depict ethnoregional and ethnic groups in Thailand can be used as critical tools to help young Thai adults better understand their compatriots from different cultures. At the same time, these tools allow the youngsters from specific ethnoregional and ethnic groups to see themselves in the books they read. In this study, I examine how the diverse ethnoregional and ethnic groups are represented in 15 Thai realistic fiction books for young adults. I also apply a critical multicultural analysis of children's literature to understand how the power relations of ethnicity, class, and gender work together within the representations of these groups of people. Critical multicultural analysis (Botelho, 2004; Botelho & Rudman, 2009), as the analytical tool in my study, pays attention to the focalization of the story, social processes among the characters, closure of the story, language use, genre (s), and historical and sociopolitical context of each story. This epistemology makes contributions to the field of children's and young adult literature in Thailand because it encourages young Thai readers not to simply read the books, but also attend to power through a multi-layered lens as they engage with power relations in young adult stories. The understanding of power relations in storylines and microinteractions

among characters can empower young adults to critically engage with literature for social justice. This critical engagement with the texts also provides the young readers with a tool to think about how the dominant ideologies about ethnicity, class, and gender are institutionalized in Thai society. It also creates a space to consider ways to resist and restructure hegemonic relations in these stories as well as in Thai society.

Moreover, this study helps to invite authors, publishers, educators, and librarians to consider the inclusion of ethnoregional and ethnic people in Thai children's and young adult literature. In addition, it calls attention to Thai scholars in the field of children's literature to conduct more research about these groups of people. Importantly, this study challenges the prevalent analytical practices of Thai scholarship and inspires shifts in literary study in Thailand.

NOTE ON THAI LANGUAGE AND TRANSLATION

The Thai romanization used in this study is based on the Royal Thai General System of transcription devised by the Royal Institute of Thailand in 1999. Exceptions are present for certain proper names, which have been transcribed by various other systems by the owners, writers, or translators. The English names of Thai kings and nobles have been adopted from the official lengthy titles, and these names are widely known among historians.

As Thai people conventionally refer to themselves and are referred to by their first names, this conventional usage is applied in this study including in the bibliography. The readers should keep in mind some helpful points about Thai language reference system. “Ph” is pronounced “p,” not as an “f” sound. The “h” in “Th” is silent.

Lastly, most translations of quotations from the text collection are mine unless otherwise noted. Since it is quite obvious that English, as the dominant language, cannot completely represent the power relations of ethnicity, class, and gender as presented in the Thai text, I include both the original text and English translation in the main body of the analysis to move back and forth between these two representational means.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Merry-Go-Round

COLORED CHILD AT CARNIVAL

Where is the Jim Crow section
On this merry-go-round,
Mister, cause I want to ride?
Down South where I come from
White and colored
Can't sit side by side.
Down South on the train
There's a Jim Crow car.
On the bus we're put in the back
But there ain't no back
To a merry-go-round!
Where's the horse
For a kid that's black?

(Hughes, 2006, p. 36)

I deliberately begin this first chapter with Langston Hughes' "Merry-Go-Round" because this poem allowed me to learn more about African Americans' lives. At the age of 17 years old, I chose to major in English literature because of my love of reading. Most of the books I read before and after attending college were classified as masterpieces of Thai and western literature. Regarding Thai young adult fiction about ethnoregional¹ and ethnic groups, I read *Luk Isan* and *Phisuea Lae Dokmai*² as the required external reading in my high school Thai classes. However, at that time, the ethnic themes were not introduced into class discussion. Moreover, the tests were multiple-choice items which related to general knowledge about the stories. I remember that I enjoyed reading those two books very much as they tell about young people whose lives are absolutely different from mine and my school friends. It was my perception that those young

¹ The term "ethnoregional" is used here because cultural differences have been taken to be characteristic of a particular region of the country rather than of a distinctive people (Keyes, 1997).

² These two fiction books are included in the text collection of this study.

characters' worlds and my world were so far away from one another even though we lived in the same country. I realized that the main characters in those two books had difficult lives, but I did not concern myself with their marginalization.

When I became an undergraduate majoring in English literature, "Merry-Go-Round" was among a few western literary works about ethnic minorities that I had a chance to read. And it is this poem that truly touched my heart, and the vivid memory of the poem always remained in my mind. This poem aroused my curiosity about racial issues in the United States. The poem might sound very simple if we simply read it as a story about a child wanting to ride a merry-go-round, but has a problem finding the right horse for himself. Reading it critically, the poem is so meaningful as it reflects the mindset of most Black people in the South in the days of racial segregation due to the Jim Crow laws that were enacted from the post-Civil War era until 1968. The depiction of Black people's oppression and the supremacy of the White race thus can be understood by examining this poem against historical and sociopolitical context of the Southern United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Back in 1903, the Black American scholar W. E. B. Du Bois (2007) stated that "The problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color-line – the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea" (p. 15). Du Bois' prediction proved right since racism has been prevalent worldwide throughout the 20th century. However, Du Bois might not have thought that the color line, which he mentioned in his book more than a century ago, would remain an important issue in many parts of the world in the new millennium. Also, I never thought that the first poem about Black Americans' lives that I read would emerge again when I turned to my research interest on diversity issues in my home country. Moreover, I have never thought that I would concern myself with my compatriots' marginalization

and would like to learn more about their lived experiences. The more I learn about them, the more I am aware about the ethnic diversity issues in my homeland.

Ideologically, Thai people do not view race as a power relation in their country because they have never experienced large-scale racial conflict as in the United States and other countries. However, ethnic diversity plays an important role in Thai society and shapes the country as it is today. Ethnicity, as a social construct, classifies people based on their shared culture and is shaped by historical and sociopolitical factors. This construct has become a way to talk about race in Thai society without using the construct of race. Like race in the United States, ethnicity has been a way to sort and marginalize people within and across Thailand's national borders.

Researcher's Lived Experiences

I was born in a middle-class family in Bangkok, Thailand. My family is of Chinese origin as my grandparents migrated from Southern China in the early 20th century. Back in the time of my parents' youth, they did not have many opportunities to be formally educated due to the poverty that their families experienced. This was further exacerbated by the fact that my grandparents' inexperience with formal schooling at that time led them to be unaware of the importance of education. However, everything changed with my generation. Most parents recognize the prominence of education and support their children to, at least, obtain a bachelor's degree in order to find a good job and earn a living so that they do not have to endure economic hardship. My parents were no exception as both of them supported my siblings and me to go to university and pursue what we wanted to study.

My interest in literature started formally on the day that I decided to major in English literature for my undergraduate studies. At that time, I knew that I enjoyed reading books, especially fiction, but I had never planned to study literature as a major.

My decision then has increasingly connected me to literature. Thus, I chose to further my graduate studies in comparative literature, and literature eventually became my area of interest and expertise when I started my teaching profession at a public university in Thailand in 1998. Before furthering my studies at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, I was responsible for teaching Introduction to Literature which is the only core course in literature for undergraduate English majors.

My appreciation of literature is based on the idea that it not only entertains the readers but also helps them understand their own lives and learn more about other people as well as the world in which they live. However, most of the literature I read in the courses taken at both the undergraduate and graduate levels come from the Western canon which mostly tells the stories of middle-and upper-middle class White European and White American characters, their lifestyles, and their values. Later, when I taught Introduction to Literature to my students, I mostly assigned them to read literature of the Western canon which I was familiar with. Hughes' poems, including "Merry-Go-Round," were some of the pieces of writing by and about African Americans that I assigned my students to read when we talked about the use of figurative language in poetry. Though reading the Western canon helps me and my students better understand others, it does limit our reading experience to just middle-and upper-middle class White characters, their cultures, and values. Due to my ignorance about diversity issues, however, I was not enthusiastic to challenge this canonical curriculum. It was not until I had to decide to pursue my studies at a higher level that I began to pay more attention to culturally diverse literature rather than just the Western canon. This interest comes from my commitment to design literature courses that reflect my students' lived experiences, and can help prepare them for a life in a diverse society in which power relations and a variety of social differences

can be found. They are expected to not only know about themselves and their communities, but also cultural diversity and social justice. In particular, my students should learn that all people deserve equal rights, opportunity, and equitable treatment in everyday life regardless of their race, ethnicity, class, gender, age, sexuality, language, religion, and so forth. The students' understanding of multiculturalism and social justice will inform their critical engagement with texts.

As many Thai Chinese descendants who came from middle-class families in Thailand achieved higher degrees of academic and socioeconomic success than the average population, most of them now belong to a dominant group in Thai society. Their domination is definitely determined by the socioeconomic privileges they gained over the others based on education, occupation, income, and family and community networks. As a Thai of Chinese descent born to a middle-class family, I am also recognized as a member of the dominant group. However, a number of my students come from poor and working-class families across the country whereas others are members of the dominant group like myself. I then strongly believe that books that represent diverse cultural groups can be used as a powerful tool to help my students as well as other young Thais to respect themselves and others. The diversity in Thailand and in our world thus motivates me to learn more about people in non-dominant cultures. My dissertation research provides me with a space to speak with and amplify marginalized voices that are socially muted.

Statement of the Problem

Since our world has become more diverse and connected, I maintain that a critical engagement with the representation of diversity in literature written for young readers will help them respect themselves and others. It is evident that throughout human history, discrimination has been based on differences in race, ethnicity, gender,

class, age, religion, sexuality, and so on. Thus, it is crucial that young people living in all parts of the world, including Thailand, understand social diversity.

However, the official discourse of multiculturalism within Thailand has not been on the official agenda (Hayami, 2006; Jory, 2000). As a result, the term “multiculturalism” is hardly heard and used in Thai society despite the fact that it exists in all countries which contain regions with different languages and cultural heritages as well as when countries with different languages and cultures share borders (Saracho & Spodek, 1983). Multiculturalism does exist in the Thai context, but Thailand is domestically and internationally perceived as a homogeneous country. This perception might come from the fact that the majority of Thai people have something in common: They speak Thai or standard Thai³ as their national language. They follow the traditional customs such as way of greeting, respect for hierarchy and cultural etiquette, to name a few. Over 90% of the Thai population identify themselves as Theravada Buddhists. Sharing language, religion, and customs, however, does not insulate Thailand from racial and ethnic power dynamics because, in reality, the population of Thailand is comprised of 62 ethnic groups. Thai is the biggest ethnic group, and Thai ethnicity is subsumed by region. The ethnic Thais are officially divided into four different groups based on the four geographical regions – the North, the Northeast (Isan),⁴ the Central Plain, and the South. A number of ethnic minorities including Chinese, Mon or Raman, Vietnamese, Khmer or Cambodian, South Asian, highlanders, sea nomads, and Malayu-descended Thais are scattered across the country.

³ Many scholars use “Standard Thai” with the uppercase “S” to refer to Central Thai or Bangkok Thai, which suggests raciolinguistic ideologies. In my work, I use the lowercase “s” in “standard Thai” to signify that this is one variety of Thai but not the only one.

⁴ I use the term Isan according to the Royal Thai General System of transcription. However, the term is also written as Isaan, Isarn, Issarn, Issan, Esan, or Esarn. It is of Pali-Sanskrit origin and simply means “northeast direction.” As the term is widely used among Thai and foreign scholars who study about this region, I use the term Isan interchangeably with the Northeastern region of Thailand throughout the dissertation.

The perception of homogeneity is a product of nation-state building which aims to promote assimilation of Thainess. The year 1939 is often noted as the turning point in Thai history when the Thai government at that time decided to change the country's name from Siam (Sayam) to Thailand. This change resulted in having all the people supposedly call themselves Thai whatever their regional or ethnic origin might be. It also suggests that the Central Thais, whose language constitutes the national language, have higher status than any other ethnoregional and ethnic group. The Central Thai language, therefore, is recognized as standard Thai which people in other regions and most ethnoregional and ethnic groups are supposed to learn. What is referred to as standard Thai is based on the idealized speech of the formally educated elite of Bangkok.

Their domination in Thai society lets the Central Thais tend to consider other Thais as both different and inferior. As a result, a number of non-Central Thais sometimes feel inferior to the Central Thais who represent privilege and dominant power in the nation. Though the country does not have any serious ethnic conflicts as in many other countries, ethnic differences and regionalism are socially and politically significant in Thai society. Studying diversity in Thai children's and young adult literature might offer some possibilities for understanding these histories and power relations.

Metaphors of mirrors, windows, and doors have often been used to explore and emphasize the importance of diversity in books written for young readers (Botelho & Rudman, 2009; Sims Bishop, 1990). Children need mirrors in which to see themselves and their communities reflected. They also need windows to view the diversity outside their own world. Doors offer them the way to go out to synthesize and enact on what they learned through the mirrors and windows. I argue that books that depict the ethnoregional and ethnic groups in Thailand can be used as an effective tool to help

young Thai people better understand their compatriots from different cultures and, at the same time, can also allow young adults from specific ethnoregional and ethnic groups to see themselves in the books they read. Therefore, how these young people and their communities are portrayed in the books written for their ages cannot be overlooked.

The metaphors of mirrors, windows, and doors call attention to who is represented, underrepresented, misrepresented, and invisible in the books. However, readers have to attend to not just what to read but also how to read critically in order to better engage with the texts and make meaning of them. Reading critically demands that young readers pay attention to how languages and images tell stories. It also asks the readers to read deeply by considering genre, point of view or focalization, interactions among characters, story closure, and characters' use of language. Additionally, it invites readers to read beyond the texts to explore connections to the historical and sociopolitical context (Botelho, 2015).

Books that represent ethnoregional and ethnic groups in Thailand are still small in number. It is quite obvious that the popular books among young Thai readers nowadays are the translated literary works mainly from Europe, the United States, Japan, and Korea while books written by Thai authors are less in both quantity and popularity. In her article, Reunruthai (2005) supports Thai children's need of fantasy when she points out that since the release of the first novel, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* in 1997, the book series by J. K. Rowling has captured the hearts and imagination of young readers all over the world including those in Thailand. Since then fantasy seems to have become the most popular genre among young readers all over the world, and also plays an important role in Thai children's and young adult books. The popularity of this genre inspired a number of Thai authors to create more fantasy novels to appeal to young Thai readers.

The findings of my literature review about the research studies on Thai children's and young adult literature also indicate that there is a dearth of studies that pay attention to the representation of these groups of people. There is only a single research that examines the images of marginalized people. Moreover, the findings show that the majority of studies analyze texts in isolation from their contexts. Drawing on Botelho (2015), children's and young adult literature is a cultural product shaped by the ideologies and publishing practices of the time in which they were produced. The context in which children's books were written and published is important and needs to be considered.

Power is very important in children's and young adult literature. As stated by Trites (2000), the protagonist in the adolescent novels must learn about the social forces that shape what they are. They learn to negotiate the levels of power which exist within the social institutions, including family, school, religion, government, and the social construction of sexuality, race, class, and gender. As children's and young adult literature is evidence of the power relations of race, class, and gender (Botelho & Rudman, 2009), simply reading books without considering power cannot empower young Thai readers to critically engage with the characters in the stories, or allow them to understand the organization of Thai society. Therefore, a theoretical framing that considers power dynamics is needed as a thinking tool to read and analyze Thai children's and young adult literature.

When referring to children's literature as a cultural product, how we define culture is also crucial because it shapes our gaze and understanding of social differences (Botelho & Rudman, 2009). As stated by Eagleton (2000), culture is one of the most complicated words in the English language. The notion of culture is complex and changes overtime resulting in multiple definitions of the term across the disciplines.

Faulkner, Baldwin, Lindsley, and Hecht (2006) used content analysis to analyze 31 definitions of culture that represent a variety of disciplines and are frequently cited. Based on this analysis, they categorized seven different themes of definitions of culture: structure, function, process, product, refinement, power and ideology, and group membership. They found that most scholars from all disciplines view culture as structure; they look at culture in terms of a system or framework of elements such as ideas, practice, symbols, and the like. A functional definition sees culture as a tool for achieving some end. Culture is also defined as a process which focuses on how culture operates. Culture as a product definition looks at culture as an artifact. A refinement definition frames culture as a sense of individual or group cultivation to higher intellect or morality. Postmodernism and postcolonialism pay attention to culture in terms of power and ideology. From this perspective, culture is seen to exist as a means for one group to exercise dominant power (political, social, artistic, ideational) over others. Culture is also widely defined as group membership, either in terms of a nation or some other sociologic groups. However, most definitions are not independent, but rather intertwined.

Children's and young adult literature as a product of culture is a representation of a specific cultural group. Hall (1997) describes "representation" as the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture through the use of language, signs, and images which stand for or represent things. By the definition of culture as group membership, culture can be referred to as a unified cultural group or distinguishing characteristics among groups. Children's and young adult literature as a product of culture suggests that it is socially constructed to represent a specific cultural group. Culture as a process of differentiation, differentiates one group from another; and as a process of domination, it is how people in a specific group create

meanings that maintain hierarchy between groups. By this definition, culture is seen as a verb (Street, 1996), suggesting that it is a process of making rather than being something. This definition of culture cuts across power/ideology when it is believed that some cultures are inherently superior to other cultures. Erikson (2016) argues that cultures are neither superior nor inferior, just different. However, it depends on how cultural difference is treated. When it is treated as a boundary, the difference that exists does not disrupt the conduct of everyday life. On the contrary, when it is treated as a border, the conduct of everyday life is disrupted. If this is the case, people who differ culturally are treated as having differing rights and obligations just as they are treated at a political border between two countries.

The notion of culture from multitudinous definitions have expanded my understanding of culture and have allowed me to view it multidimensionally. Confining the definition of culture to the complex whole of just values, customs, beliefs, and practices, while excluding power as being a part of it, is a mismatch with our globalized world (Botelho & Rudman, 2009). This is because power is embedded in our life experiences and both culture and power has significantly have shaped our lives and societies. As Dirks, Eley, and Ortner (1994) state, culture is emergent from relations of power and domination and a medium in which power is both constituted and resisted.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

In this study, I analyze books written for Thai young adult readers under the genre of realistic fiction, which I think, is the best literary genre to bring young readers up close to think and feel about the lives of the main characters and their microinteractions in the contemporary era. It is this genre that young readers can see their lived experiences represented in the books (Botelho & Rudman, 2009).

The purpose of this study is to examine how Thai young adult literature portrays ethnoregional and ethnic groups through critical multicultural analysis and critical discourse analysis to understand how the power relations of ethnicity, class, and gender work together within the representations of these cultural communities. The following research questions guide my inquiry:

1. How are the specific ethnoregional and ethnic groups represented in selected Thai realistic fiction for young adults?
2. How are the power relations of ethnicity, class, and gender implicated in these representations?

The first research question is important for this study because I would like to point out that the portrayal of ethnoregional and ethnic people needs to be considered. How the youth characters from these communities are depicted in books written for young readers is even more important since these books can be used as a tool to help young people better understand themselves and others. The second research question is required to emphasize how the simple analysis of how these groups of people are represented might offer insight into their lived experience. However, the understanding of these representations without consideration of the power relations of ethnicity, class, and gender cannot call readers' attention to engage their interest in social justice. Critical multicultural examination of Thai young adult realistic fiction thus offers a way for readers to interrupt and deconstruct dominant ideologies in Thai society.

Significance of the Study

Stories about ethnoregional and ethnic groups is not a major focus in books for young Thai readers. Moreover, the research studies devoted to it have been very limited. This study is significant because it helps to call attention to authors, publishers, educators,

and librarians to consider the inclusion of ethnoregional and ethnic people in Thai children's and young adult literature. It also calls attention to Thai scholars in the field of children's literature to conduct more research about these groups of people.

As the findings of my literature review indicate that decontextualized literary study is insufficient for understanding Thai children's and young adult books as cultural products and how Thai society is organized, this study challenges the prevalent analytical practices of Thai scholarship and inspires shifts in literary study in Thailand. Close reading as the main practice of New Criticism, in many ways, reproduces power relations because it ignores the historical and sociopolitical context of texts. Critical multicultural analysis (Botelho, 2004; Botelho & Rudman, 2009), as the analytical tool in my study, makes contributions to the field of children's and young adult literature in Thailand because it encourages the young readers not to simply read the books, but also pay attention to the power relations of ethnicity, class, and gender through a multi-layered lens to unmask the embedded power relations in stories that are written for them. The understanding of power relations in storylines and microinteractions among characters is important because it can empower the youngsters to critically engage with literature for social justice. This critical engagement with the texts also provides the young readers with a tool to think about how Thai society is sociopolitically organized.

Theoretical Framework

Power is the main focus of this study because it would be impossible to understand what a society is if the concept of power is not understood (Couzens Hoy, 1986). Since power is an explicit central theme in Michel Foucault's work, my theoretical framework builds on his theory of power to provide insight on how power relations of ethnicity, class, and gender get enacted and disseminated within discourses in Thai young adult literature. In order to help me better understand the power relations mentioned

previously, the conceptual framework of race, ethnicity, class, and gender are also considered. In addition, theory of discourse analysis is applied to understand how power and discourse work together in Thai young adult realistic fiction about thnoregional and ethnic groups.

Foucault (1995) defines power as “relations, a more-or-less organized, hierarchical, coordinated cluster of relations” (p. 198). He thinks of power as something exercised, but not possessed. He states that “[P] power exists only when it is put into action” (Foucault, 1983, p. 219). Thus, the exercise of power is the main focus in his discussion about power. “What is power?” is the question at the center of everything. Moreover, he argues that the other questions which need to be asked about “power” include:

Who exercises power? How? On whom? Who makes decisions for me? Who is preventing me from doing this and telling me to do that? Who is programming my movements and activities? Who is forcing me to live in a particular place when I work in another? How are these decisions on which my life is completely articulated taken? and “What exactly happens when someone exercises power over another?” (Foucault, 1995, p. 41)

Foucault (1995) emphasizes that the question of “Who exercises power?” needs to be resolved, but cannot be resolved until the other question “How does it happen?” is considered at the same time. By this, he means even though we know who decides something, we still do not really know how and why it is being made, or in other words, how power is exercised. Foucault states that power is everywhere; everyone exercises and demonstrates power; and power is exercised within discourses. Additionally, he asserts that power is exercised by individuals or groups of individuals (Foucault, 1983).

As race, class, and gender are constructed, circulated, and reconstructed through discourse, they are inseparable from discourse and power (Botelho & Rudman, 2009).

Discourses, in Foucault's works, are "ways of constituting knowledge together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and the relations between them" (Weedon, 1997, p. 108). He argues that not all discourses have social power and authority, and the most powerful discourses in our society are institutionally based. The power relations of race, class, and gender need to be considered to let readers learn how to exercise power as well as how power is exercised on them. In order to better understand how race, class, and gender are considered in my study, I briefly present these concepts.

Race, class, and gender are socially constructed. The concept of race is produced by the dominant ideologies associated with biology. Race, as a biologically based concept, distinguishes people on the basis of their physical appearance such as skin color, hair color, eye color, and facial features. These biological distinctions are used as the boundaries to include or exclude individuals from group membership. In a society structured by White supremacy as in the United States, people of color thus are oppressed due to these differences. However, most scientists today consider race as a social rather than a biological construct. In other words, race is not fixed. Race, as a social construct, results in different cultures having different perspectives about race. By this, the same person could be categorized into different racial groups in different societies (Yang, 2000).

As the Thai population is diverse in terms of ethnicity rather than race, as in the United States, the term "ethnicity" is applied to refer to the three dimensions of power relations that shape the lived experiences of Thai people in the same way that race, class, and gender play a significant role in U.S. society. Similar to race, ethnicity is also a social construct. Some perspectives subsume ethnicity within race, whereas others view race as a special subset of ethnicity (Denton & Deane, 2010). While race

is usually linked to biological origins, ethnicity is associated to culture or geographical area of origin. Ethnic categorization rules differ from one society to another. The boundaries of ethnic group membership are marked by its unique cultural characteristics such as language, religion, and customs or by national origin (Yang, 2000). However, Keyes (1979) states that a member of a particular ethnic group might express his or her cultural identity differently depending on the situation, and particularly when he or she has to compete for productive resources or any other advantages. For example, Isan people have at least three different cultural identities. They are Laotian when encountering Central Thais, but they become Thai when traveling to Laos due to their education in Thai schools. Furthermore, they have an Isan identity because of their lived experiences which are deeply associated with the region of Isan. Thus, an individual may have more than one ethnic identity.

Both race and ethnicity, as social constructs, are not fixed. Therefore, a specific group's status as a racial or an ethnic group changes over time and varies by place. Importantly, the categories of race and ethnicity can overlap since ethnic groups may have distinguishing physical characteristics while racial groups may have cultural traits that differ from the dominant groups (Healey, 1998). Though Thai people are diverse in terms of ethnicity, some ethnic minorities are also racialized due to their physical traits, or skin color, in particular. A number of Thai people perceive that those who have lighter complexions come from higher social classes, whereas those who have darker skin are supposed to come from the country's poorer, rural regions, or are associated with outdoor laborers. As a result, dark-skinned people might be looked down upon and treated differently by some people. The main target of discrimination against skin color in Thai society seems to be the dark-skinned people from the rural areas. Colorism thus plays a part in Thai society as in many other parts of the world.

Similar to both race and ethnicity, colorism is also a social construct. Burke and Embrick (2008) define colorism as the allocation of privileges and disadvantages according to the lightness or darkness of one's skin which results in the tendency to favor lighter skin over darker skin. Colorism and racism therefore share something in common. While racism is a discrimination based on racial categorization, colorism is connected with discrimination based on skin tone. Additionally, Burke and Embrick (2008) assert that the issues of colorism are pervasive and enacted within and among racial groups in various contexts. Since racial and ethnic groups are connected to one another as previously mentioned, I would like to add that the issues of colorism are also present across and between ethnic groups.

According to Tharps (2016), skin color matters because human beings respond to one another based on physical appearance. She states that in the future the term "race" might retire from official use, but skin color will continue to serve as the most obvious criterion in evaluating and judging people. She claims that colorism is a global issue and a global money maker because the worldwide skin-lightening industry plays an important role in keeping both women and men believing that they need light skin to succeed. Based on this belief, Tharps states that light skin is a universal imperative for health, wealth, beauty, and power. This phenomenon is evident since currently light skin is promoted as global beauty trends in several Asian markets including Thailand, and skin whitening products are advertised to promote health and beauty (Napat, 2013). Based on colorism in Thai society, many Thai women as well as a number of Thai men believe that light skin color is considered attractive and desirable. As a result, race, ethnicity, and colorism work together in Thai society. Moreover, these three categories tangle with class because, as mentioned earlier, most dark-skinned people come from the lower socioeconomic standing families and rural areas of the country.

As race is not a fixed characteristic of a person, it can change when someone achieves wealth. Therefore, a person can be of different races at different times in his/her life (Denton, N. A. & Deane, G. D., 2010). Given this, race is strongly linked to socioeconomic status or social class. Since ethnicity has the same characteristics as race in terms of its fluidity, a person's ethnicity can also change after his/her social class changes. Consequently, it rather becomes impossible to think about race and ethnicity in isolation from class.

Class is pervasively defined as social hierarchy of lower, middle, and upper classes. This social hierarchy, however, is not fixed as the individuals and groups can change their class position from the bottom to the top of the society (Gibson-Graham, Resnick & Wolff, 2000). hooks (2000), drawing on both her personal and professional journeys, argues that higher class standing can create a buffer for people of color. While the phrase race, class, and gender has become a mantra, and the study of race, class, and gender is currently a main focus of scholarship in the United States, class is the category that is almost always ignored among the three. This phenomenon is completely different from Thailand since class is always considered a central social issue within the Thai context while race or ethnicity is almost always overlooked.

Feminist theory states that gender is not known through its physical appearance, but through its identity. Gender is perceived as being constructed through a set of acts: "[T]he various acts of gender creates the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all" (Butler, 1991, p. 273). It is to say that a man and a woman take roles or perform the gender role that is expected by the society he or she lives in. Gender roles, in general, are universalized. For example, in many communities, wives are almost always expected to perform the role of homemaker and caretaker of children and family, whereas husbands are expected to be the sole breadwinner. In reality, however, gender roles vary across different cultural and class groups over time.

Botelho and Rudman (2009) have considered the power relations of race, class, and gender in U.S. children's literature since these three dimensions matter in shaping American people's actual experiences. However, in my study, which tends to examine the organization of Thai society through Thai young adult literature, I look at ethnicity, class, and gender to see how they work together. I also consider race and colorism to better understand ethnicity within the Thai context.

As the characters' use of language is crucial to critical multicultural analysis, theory of discourse analysis is used as an approach to the analysis of language use in social practices within society. Since there are many different approaches to discourse analysis, I draw on Gee's discourse analysis approach to look at language in use in terms of meaning as combination of ways of saying, doing, and being. As stated by Gee (2014), language is used for different social functions. It not only allows us to inform each other, but it also allows us to engage in action, and take on different socially significant identities. Thus, to understand anything anyone says thoroughly, we need to know who is saying it, and what the person saying it is trying to do.

As critical multicultural analysis reminds the readers to be conscious of dominant discourses, discourse analysis is thus a way to analyze language in use in the social practices of society to understand how language plays a role in the exercise of power among characters.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

Though there are other power relations like sexuality, age, and ability to name a few, for the purpose of this study I focus on the power relations of ethnicity, class, and gender in Thai young adult literature because these power dynamics structure people's life experiences (Yang, 2000). These power relations play central roles in how Thailand and the world are organized sociopolitically.

Another limitation is that my focus is on realistic fiction since I am particularly interested in how realistic narratives tell stories about the ethnoregional and ethnic groups in Thailand. Though these groups of people might also be represented in other literary genres including poetry, nonfiction narratives, and the like, these texts are beyond the scope of this study.

Dissertation Chapter Overview

This dissertation is made up of seven chapters. The first chapter provides an introduction to my background of diversity awareness as well as my lived experiences which connect me to this study. It also outlines the statement of problem, purpose and research questions that guide my inquiry, as well as the significance of this study. Additionally, it includes a discussion of the theoretical framework applied in this dissertation. The chapter ends with the scope and limitations of the study.

Chapter 2 contains a literature review that examines the importance of diversity in children's and young adult literature, diversity issues in the Thai context, and historical background of nationalism and Thaification. The chapter also considers the concept of multiculturalism as well as education policy and core curriculum in Thailand. In addition, it includes a discussion about the historical background of Thai children's and young adult literature and research studies about Thai literature for young adults as well as research on Thai literature for adults that focuses on the particular ethnoregional and ethnic groups. In this discussion I examine the analytical practices of these studies and how they consider the power relations of ethnicity, class, and gender as represented in the books.

The third chapter outlines the methodological approach used in this study. I draw on critical multicultural analysis to explore how ethnicity, class, and gender are enacted in Thai young adult realistic fiction, and critical discourse analysis to examine

language use in the texts. I continue with the discussion of data collection and data analysis of the text collection.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 are the analyses of the data in my text collection. I begin the analysis by providing the historical and sociopolitical context of ethnoregional and ethnic groups in the selected books. Next, I write about the historical and sociopolitical context of text collection by providing information about the publishing practices of each text. Additionally, I explore the representation practices of ethnoregional and ethnic groups in each book. After that, I analyze the social processions among the characters and their use of language to examine how power is exercised. I also consider focalization and story closure in each book.

The last chapter, Chapter 7, includes the findings and discussion of the implications for future research, theory, teaching, and publishing.

CHAPTER 2

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This literature review begins with a discussion of research literature on the importance of diversity in literature for children and young adults. Then, it explores ethnoregional and ethnic groups to offer an insight into diversity in Thailand nowadays, and moves back to investigate the diversity in the premodern era of the country until the time of Siamese nationalism and Thaification. After that, the review examines the concept of multiculturalism as well as education policy and core curriculum in Thailand to explore the existence of multiculturalism and multicultural education in Thai society. Additionally, it considers historical background of Thai children's and young adult literature as well as the research studies about Thai literature for young adults that depict ethnoregional and ethnic groups. Due to a dearth of studies about the representation of these groups of people, the review also investigates the major research focus of the overall studies to help me better understand what the researchers in the field of Thai children's and young adult literature pay attention to. Moreover, it considers the research studies on Thai literature for adults that focuses on the particular ethnoregional and ethnic groups to help inform the inquiry about representation. Lastly, the review discusses the analytical practices of these studies and how they consider the power relations of ethnicity, class, and gender as represented in those books.

This literature review is based extensively on books, articles, reports, theses, and dissertations written both in Thai and English. My search for these was conducted mainly through the University of Massachusetts Amherst electronic databases which include the Educational Research Information Clearinghouse (ERIC), MLA (Modern Language Association) International Bibliography, Google Scholar, and Scholarworks @UMassAmherst. My search of studies on ethnoregional and ethnic groups in Thai

children's literature yielded no results while a very small number of studies on Thai literature related to other issues e.g., Thai texts for children in the United States. My investigations of Thai research literature were also done by using the electronic databases of universities in Thailand including Chulalongkorn University, Silpakorn University, Srinakharinwirot University, Kasetsart University, Ramkhamhaeng University, Thaksin University, and Prince of Songkla University. The search results yielded only one thesis that considered marginalized people in young adult literature and a small number of theses that examined minorities and some ethnoregional groups in literature written for adult readers. However, it yielded a number of research studies on children's literature on other issues. Regarding the research studies on Thai children's literature, I included a study on ethnic groups and on several other issues which were conducted after Ampha Otrakul presented her paper on children's books in Thailand in the 1988 International Resources and Exchange First International Conference in Munich, Germany. I selected the studies that might inform the inquiry of the major focus on Thai children's literature. Furthermore, I included research studies which pay attention to the ethnoregional and ethnic groups in Thai literature for adults.

On my trip to collect data in Thailand between June and August 31 in the year 2018, I found a book about the history of Thai nation and Thai society and a book about other groups within Thainess written by Thai scholars which I brought back to the United States.

The Importance of Diversity in Literature for Children and Young Adults

In the United States "multicultural literature" is a term that has been developed and used in the fields of children's literature and education in order to campaign the inclusion of diversity in children's books, which was a result of the Civil Rights Movement in the mid 20th century. Prior to 1960s most books, texts, plays, and media

about people of color were written and produced by White people for White audiences. A very small number of books by authors of color were published. As a result, most of these materials underrepresented, misrepresented and stereotyped the other ethnic minorities (Gilton, 2007).

Nancy Larrick 's article, "The All White-World of Children's Books," which was published in the *Saturday Review* in 1965, is often credited with influencing the rise of multicultural literature in the United States. In her study, Larrick (1965) surveyed more than 5,000 trade books published for children between 1962 and 1964. The findings revealed that only 349 books (6.7%) included one or more Black characters. Interestingly, many of these characters were stereotypically depicted as servants or slaves, sharecroppers, migrant workers, or unskilled laborers. Her study disclosed that African Americans, the largest minority group at that time, were invisible in US children's literature. Actually, African American librarians had demanded for publishing houses to respond to this invisibility, but their protests were not heard. Larrick, as a White author and founder of the International Reading Association, used her strong connections to the publishing and literacy worlds to call attention to the practices of exclusion and stereotyping (Botelho & Rudman, 2009).

From the late 1960s throughout the 1980s there was an increase in the number of children's books for multiethnic minorities. Several awards for books by and about people of color were established, and several organizations promoted children's literature that reflected underrepresented ethnically diverse groups. For example, the Council on Interracial Books for Children (CIBC) was established in 1965 to promote and develop children's literature that reflects the multiracial and ethnic society. As stated by Gilton (2007), CIBC had a significant role in the history of multicultural literature since it set the first standards for the portrayal of the oppressed cultural

groups. The Coretta Scott King Book Award was founded in 1969 to provide annual recognition to outstanding African American authors and illustrators of books for children and young adults. It is apparent that the focus of multiculturalism in children's books during this time was on African Americans rather than any other minority groups, including studies on their experiences in youth literature (Botelho & Rudman, 2009).

Though there was a significant growth in the publication of the multiethnic minorities' books for children and young adults, it was not until the late 1980s that the term multicultural children's literature became recognized and gained wider acceptance in the mainstream world. It is worth noting that the term was initially related to just only race and ethnicity; as a result, the term's early definition was limited to literature about and by people of color.

However, there were other movements that contributed to multicultural literature; other underrepresented groups such as women, the elderly, people with disabilities, and gay men and lesbians also joined the call for justice and equity in education (Kiefer, 2010). These movements led to the expansion of the term by the mid-1990s when the definition of multicultural literature also included other groups and issues such as gender, class, sexual orientation, ability, age, religion, and geographical location (Botelho & Rudman, 2009). All the definitions of multicultural literature have one thing in common, that is, they focus on the inclusion of diverse populations in literature for young people. It is noteworthy that the movement of diversity inclusion in children's literature persists to this day as more recently, WE NEED DIVERSE BOOKS™ (WNDB) (2019), a non-profit organization of children's books lovers, started producing and promoting literature that reflects and honors young people's diverse experiences, including (but not limited to) LGBTQIA, Native, people

of color, gender diversity, people with disabilities, and ethnic, cultural, and religious minorities. This group is calling attention to publishing trends and applying pressure on publishers to expand their offerings for young readers.

Scholars in the field agree that several issues needed to be considered for evaluating the quality of multicultural literature. Most of them have addressed the issues of authenticity of cultural representations, authority of authors, and stereotyping.

According to Cai (2002), cultural authenticity is the most important criterion for evaluating multicultural literature since no matter how imaginative and how well-written a book is, it is unacceptable if it seriously conveys misleading images of a culture. This issue is connected to the issue of the author's authority when it is highly debatable whether an inside perspective author, who writes from the point of view of a member of that culture, is more likely to portray the cultural group more authentically than an author with an outside perspective who writes as a nonmember of the group being portrayed. However, as stated by Henderson (2005), the inside/outside perspective is probably the most controversial issue when the authors from the two distinct perspectives view it from oppositional positions. Authors who write inside their own culture argue against the cultural inauthenticity provided by outside perspectives, which they claim, weakens their stories. Authors who are nonmembers of the cultures they write about, claim that an author's artistic freedom should not be limited just because he or she is an outsider of the culture. Moreover, they argue that a story can also be authentic even though the author writes from the outside perspective. Temple, Martinez, and Yokata (2015) note that the issue of authors' authority is complicated. They conclude that it does not matter whether an insider or an outsider author creates the work as long as they provide authentic voices and images of the cultural groups depicted.

Stereotyping is another issue relating to multicultural literature. Cai (2002) argues that it is probably the most sensitive issue among all since it causes anger and frustration for the oppressed cultural groups that are misrepresented in the literature. He also states that stereotyping is a social-political issue because “stereotypes are created by the dominant culture to distort the images and destroy the dignity of the dominated cultures” (p. 81-82). According to Temple et al. (2015), stereotypes were found abundantly in books created by mainstream authors and illustrators in the past. Most scholars, when raising this issue, almost always refer to samples of popular but controversial books such as Bannerman’s 1899, *The Story of Little Black Sambo*; the 1938 book by Bishop, *The Five Chinese Brothers*; and Grossman and Long’s 1991 book, *Ten Little Rabbits*. The first and second books presented negative stereotypical images of Blacks and Asians respectively while the last one was accused of portraying Native American characters as animals.

The evolution of multicultural literature for children points out clearly that the inclusion of diverse cultural groups is needed for a multicultural society such as in the United States. Though the increasing number of books depicting specific cultural groups is still not commensurate with their growing population, at least the status of multicultural literature in the field of children’s literature today has improved significantly since 1965. However, Gilton (2007) notes that since 1985, society has become conscious, and thus melting-pot books were created by White authors using mainstream publishers while most of the books about specific cultural groups written by authors of color were published by alternative presses.

Multicultural literature, then, involves inclusion and cultural diversity. However, the scholars in the field of children’s literature argue that good multicultural literature should promote both cultural and power awareness in the texts. Ching (2005) asserts

that multicultural children's literature should be used as an instrument of power to help young readers think critically and be aware of social justice in the society which they live. According to Cai (2002), multiculturalism not only aims to understand, accept, and appreciate cultural differences, but also to empower marginalized cultures to have greater voice and authority in order to achieve social justice among all cultures. Without addressing the issues of power in the texts, multicultural literature might help young people be aware of cultural diversity, but it cannot empower them to change inequity into equity.

Books that represent diversity are also important for young Thai readers. Books that depict the ethnoregional and ethnic groups in Thailand can be used as an effective tool to help young Thai people better understand their compatriots from different cultures and, at the same time, can also allow youngsters from specific ethnoregional and ethnic groups see themselves in the books they read. Moreover, they can be used as an instrument of power to remind the young Thai readers to be aware of social justice in Thai society. Therefore, how these young people and their communities are portrayed, and how power is considered in the books written for their ages, cannot be overlooked. However, books that offer mirrors, windows, and doors to represent and explore the diversity are still rare for Thai youths. My data collection indicates that there is still only a small number of books that tell stories about ethnoregional and ethnic people in Thailand.

To better understand the situation of literature about these people, it is imperative to have some insights into the ethnic diversity of the country. The following sections will explore the overall situation of ethnic diversity in Thailand in the contemporary era before going back to the premodern period of the country.

Ethnic Diversity in Thai Society

Thailand, officially known as the Kingdom of Thailand, is a country in the heart of mainland Southeast Asia. It is bordered to the north by Myanmar and Laos, to the east by Laos and Cambodia, to the west by the Andaman Sea and Myanmar, and to the south by Malaysia and the Gulf of Thailand. The report on population characteristics for the years 2015 and 2016 by the National Statistical Office (2016) states that Thailand has a population of 67.2 million. According to the Country Report to the United Nations Committee on the International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (2011) available from the Department of Rights and Liberties Promotion of the Thai Ministry of Justice, the population of Thailand comprises 62 ethnic groups classified by five language families including Tai, Austro Asiatic, Sino-Tibetan, Austronesian, and Hmong-Mien.

It is estimated that 91% of the population in Thailand speak languages of the Tai family including Kaloeng, Khammuang/Yuan (Northern Thai), Tai Dam, Nyaw, Tai Khun, Thai Korat, Central Thai, Thai Takbai, Thai Loei, Tai Lu, Tai Ya, Tai Yai/Shan, Southern Thai, Phu Thai, Tai Yuan, Phuan, Yong, Yoy, Lao Khrang, Lao Ti, Lao Wiang/Lao Klang, Lao Lom, Lao Isan, and Saek. The Austronesian family, which consists of Malayu/Nayu/Yawi, Moken/Moklen, and Urak Lawoi, is spoken by about 3.3% of the population. Approximately 3.3% of the population speaks the Austro-Asiatic family which are Kasong, Kuy/Kuay, Khmu Thailand Khmer/Northern Khmer, Chong, Sa-oc, Sakai (Kensiw, Maniq), Samre, So (Thavueng), Nyah Kur (Chaobon), Nyoe, Bru (Kha), Plang (Samtoa, Lua), Paluang (Dala-ang), Mon, Mal-Pray (Lua, Tin), Mlabri (Tongluang), Lamet (Lua), Lavua (Lawa, Lua), Wa, and Vietnamese. The Sino-Tibetan family is used by approximately 1.5% of the inhabitants and it is comprised of Guong (Ugong), Karen, Jingpaw/Kachin, Chinese, Yunnannese Chinese, Bisu, Burmese,

Lahu (Muzur), Lisu, Akha, Bamar, Lahu, Lisu, Pwo, and Mpi. Hmong (Meo) and Mien (Yao) are languages in the Hmong-Mien family which is spoken by about 0.5% of the population (Suwilai et al., 2004).

It is worth mentioning that the names of the ethnic groups and the languages they speak are quite complicated because each of them has more than a single name as shown above. According to Chit (2001), the history of human society indicates that the more civilized people or dominant groups almost always address those who are less civilized, non-dominant or ethnic minority groups who are under their control by offensive or insulting names. The more civilized groups might not consider the less civilized groups as human beings and call them by names that are related to animals, evil, or demons to name but a few. Groups with power, privileges, and social status usually call ethnic minority groups by names which signify that the latter are slaves, savages, or the like. As a result, most of the ethnic minorities in Thailand and their languages have both an autonym and an exonym.

Ethnoregional and Ethnic Groups in Contemporary Thai Context

The modern day Thai population is descendant of people who once had their own cultural traditions. Thai ethnicity is the ethnic majority in Thailand. Though they are not monolithic and are officially divided into four different groups based on the four geographical regions – the North, the Northeast (Isan), the Central Plain, and the South. The latest data on population indicates that Central Thailand consists of approximately 28.6% of the population. Bangkok, the capital and the most populous city, is situated in this region and it has about 12.8% of the population. Central Thailand thus is the most populous region of the country. The second largest group consists of the Northeastern Thais who are descendants of Lao people. About 27.9% of the Thai population lives in this region. The Northern Thais, heirs to the Lanna Kingdom in

ancient times, forms the third largest group with approximately 17.1% of the population. Southern Thailand is on the Malay Peninsula. The southernmost provinces have been influenced by neighboring Malaysia, and are the Malay-Muslim majority areas. This region has around 13.6% of the whole population (National Statistical Office, 2016). The Thai language spoken by Bangkok people is regarded as the country's official national language and is taught in schools across the country, whereas the other Thais in the three other regions speak their own dialects. The Thai language is always referred to as standard Thai, Central Thai, or Bangkok Thai in English while most people in Thailand just call it *Phasa Thai* or Thai language. The dialect of Northern Thai is called *Phasa Nuea* or *Kham Mueang*; the Northeastern Thai is known as *Phasa Isan*, and Southern Thai is *Phasa Tai* or *Pak Tai*.

The distinction of the people in the four regions points out clearly that Thai ethnicity is subsumed by region. There are also a number of ethnic minorities other than Thai scattered throughout the country. The Department of Provincial Administration, Ministry of Interior defined the term "minorities" in 1999 as "probably groups of persons without Thai nationality, who are less in number than the original inhabitants of the country and have distinct cultures and traditions; have entered Thailand in different ways, i.e. as illegal immigrants, or granted temporary shelter," (As cited in Department of Rights and Liberties Promotion, Ministry of Justice, 2011). There were 18 minority groups based on this definition including Vietnamese Displaced Persons, Chinese Displaced Persons in three sub-groups, namely ex-soldiers of the National Army, Haw or Yunnanese Chinese Displaced Persons and Independent Haw Chinese, and Ex Chinese Malayu Communist Militants, or Comrades for the Development of Thailand. Then, in 2005 the definition of the term "ethnic group" was given as:

people of other races or nationalities that live among other peoples who are larger in number. This may include groups of people without Thai nationality, who have their own distinct cultures and traditions and who have entered or lived in Thailand in different ways. (As cited in Department of Rights and Liberties Promotion, Ministry of Justice, 2011)

Based on the definition above, the 2011 country report classifies ethnic minorities in Thailand into four main groups by the geographical characteristics of locality, way of life, culture and the condition of problems. These four ethnic groups include people on the highlands, *Chao Le* or sea nomads, Malayu-descended Thais, and other ethnic groups which, in this report, only focused on those in the Northeast. It is worth noting that the definition of “minority” as given earlier is not that appropriate to the current situation. As pointed by Sirijit (2016), the term “minority” in Thailand almost always has a negative meaning as it is used to refer to those who are not considered Thai people and may pose a threat to national security. Thus, I assume that the definition of “ethnic group” was given later to be used as a euphemism of “minority.” Over the past decades, the term “ethnic group” or “ethnic minority” has been used in the academia to avoid cultural discrimination. In this dissertation thus I refer to people other than of Thai ethnicity as “ethnic group” or “ethnic minority.” In the following sections I describe the four ethnic groups as mentioned in the 2011 report and also provide some information concerning the significant ethnic communities.

People of the highlands are described as mountain people⁵ as are other groups of people that live on the highlands with the mountain people. These people live in the mountains in the north and to the west of the country. According to the Department of Social Development and Welfare, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (As cited in Department of Rights and Liberties Promotion, Ministry of Justice, 2011), 10 ethnic groups of mountain people in decreasing order of population size are Karen, Hmong, Lahu, Akha, Mian, Tin, Lisu, Sua, Kamu, and Mlabri. Other ethnic groups

⁵ I use the term “mountain people” to refer to people who live in the hills or mountains of Thailand while the term “hill tribe” is used as an equivalence of *Chao Khao* in standard Thai.

that live with the mountain people are, for example, Paluang, Tongsu, Kachin, Thai-leu, Yunnanese Chinese, Tai Yai, Cambodian, Chinese, Mon, Burmese, and Laotian. *Chao Le* or sea nomads is an ethnic group consisting of other subgroups namely Mekan or Moken, Moglan, and Urak Lawoi. These people have lived on the islands off the coastal provinces along the Andaman Sea in the Southern region of Thailand for hundreds of years without ever owning the land on which their villages settled. Due to their traditional culture, they believe that everyone has the right to have access and use the lands.

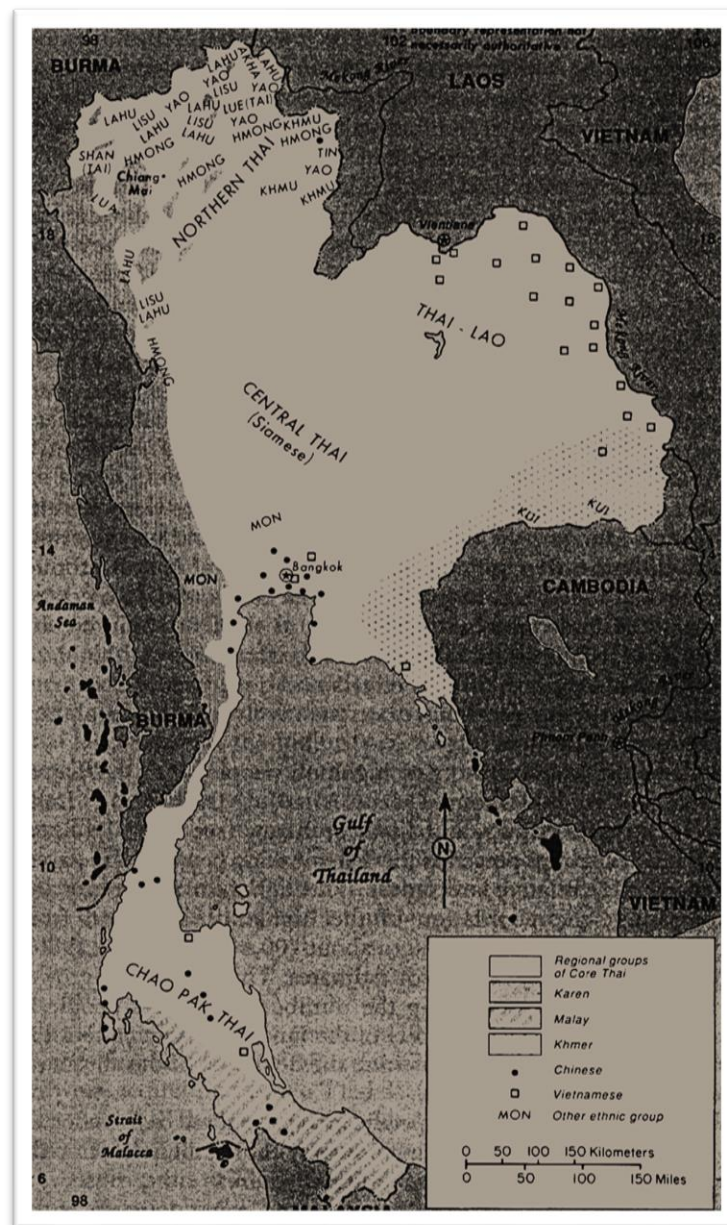


Figure 1: Map of Ethnoregional and Ethnic Groups in Thailand (LePoer, 1987)

Malayu-descended Thais worship the Islamic religion and call themselves Malayu Muslims or Malay Muslims. Most of them speak Malay as their first language. The majority of Malay Muslims live in the southern provinces which share a border with Malaysia. They are also referred to as Thai Muslims by the Thai government and Thai people in general. However, the Muslim community generally includes Thai Muslims who are scattered across the country.

Among the other ethnic groups not yet described above, the Chinese are the largest. They have been part of Thai society for a long time since a large number of Chinese immigrated from southeastern China to Thailand in the late 19th century. As there has been significant intermarriage between the Thai and the Chinese communities, most Chinese assimilated into Thai society and self-identify solely as Thai, especially the new generation. Thais of Chinese descent then are found everywhere in the country, particularly in town areas. They are numerous in modern Thai society and are engaged in business and commerce throughout the country.

The other ethnic minority groups also include the Mon or Raman, Vietnamese, Khmer or Cambodians, and the South Asians. The Mon migrated from Burma or present day Myanmar, during the 16th to 18th century and settled mainly in the North and the Central plain. The groups of Vietnamese arrived in Thailand from the 19th through the mid-20th century and mostly live in the Northeast of Thailand as well as the northeast and southeast of Bangkok. Some groups of Khmer left their country to escape political turmoil since 1975. The South Asian community, both Hindus and Sikhs, are found working mostly as tailors and textile merchants in Bangkok.

Moreover, for approximately three decades, Thailand has been a destination for migrant workers from neighboring countries mainly from Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos. Over the past few years there has been a growing number of migrant

workers particularly from Myanmar. According to International Organization for Migration (2018), an estimated four to five million migrants are working in Thailand nowadays. Many of them, however, are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation due to their illegal status. Also, these migrant laborers are often portrayed in Thai media reports as a threat to personal safety, social order and public health, as troublemakers and a burden to Thailand.

The diversity of ethnoregional and ethnic groups in the contemporary Thai context makes clear that Thailand is, in fact, one of the largest multicultural countries in Southeast Asia. However, it is perceived as a homogeneous country due to the Central Thailand domination. Next, I investigate the diversity issues of the country from the era of premodern Thailand, or Siam, until the reform of King Chulalongkorn in the Rattanakosin or Bangkok period.

Diversity Issues in Premodern Siam to King Chulalongkorn's Reforms

The population of Thailand has become diverse since the time of premodern Siam (Sayam in standard Thai), the former name of the country. Dating back to the time of the first three kings of the Chakri Dynasty who reigned over Bangkok from 1782 to 1851, the lands in what are today northern Thailand, Laos, the southernmost part of Yunnan, the sultanates of Patani,⁶ Kedah, Kelantan, and Trengganu on the Malay Peninsula, and the Kingdom of Cambodia had all been made vassal states of Bangkok. In the middle of the 19th century, tens of thousands of people living in what is present day Laos were persuaded to resettle in Siam, mainly in today's northeastern Thailand. The Lao people then became the largest group that differed from the Siamese in premodern Siam. Also, there were a number of other indigenous peoples such as

⁶ Patani is used to refer to the area encompassing the provinces of Pattani (with two t's), Yala, Narathiwat, and parts of Songkhla in today's Southern Thailand.

the Mon, Khmer, Malay Muslims, and mountain people living in Siam. In addition, a large number of immigrants, mainly from southern China, had settled in the country in the late 19th century. As a result, late 19th century Siam included many different indigenous peoples and a large number of immigrants that were significantly different in cultural characteristics from the Bangkok elites who ruled the kingdom. However, the diversity of cultures represented by the immigrants and indigenous people did not cause any problems for the Bangkok premodern Siamese rulers until the threat of Western colonialism by Great Britain and France during the reign of King Rama V, better known as King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910), in the early 20th century. Ever since, the politics of ethnicity in Siam have been shaped by Thai nationalism and nation states (Keyes, 1997).

In the late 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, Western colonization expanded in most of Southeast Asia. The major colonizers were Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, Great Britain, France, and the United States. Though Siam was the only Southeast Asian state to remain independent during the colonial period, it experienced the colonial power of both Great Britain and France, especially during the reign of King Chulalongkorn. The British and French justified the expansion of their colonial territories in Southeast Asia by claiming that peoples who shared the same cultural heritage should be under the same polity. Based on the logic of ethnicity as mentioned above, the French in particular, used this as a justification for dismembering Siam and uniting Laos and Cambodia (Keyes, 1997).

After the Franco-Siamese War in 1893, Siam was forced to cede to France the territory of Laos, located east of the Mekong River. In 1907, France took over three territories in northwestern Cambodia and the Lao territory west of the Mekong that had been under Siamese suzerainty. Realizing the threat of the Western colonial powers,

King Chulalongkorn undertook reforms which affected every aspect of Siamese life. His major reform included abolishing slavery and labor-service requirements, reorganizing the administrative system into ministries and creating a centralized bureaucracy, instituting a uniform and centralized system of administration over the outlying provinces, systematizing government revenue collection, establishing law courts and modernizing the judiciary, introducing a modern school system, and expanding the communication system through the construction of railways, and the establishment of post and telegraph services. In 1909, the Siamese government lost its rights over four Malay states, Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah and Perlis, to Great Britain. King Chulalongkorn's reforms are said to have brought about the most change to the country of Siam in all of its history. The administrative reform during his reign marked a significant step in modern Thai history because it formed the basis of the modern Thai ministerial system. More interestingly, it ended the traditional feudal system based on personal domination to a centrally-governed national state with established borders and modern political institutions.

The next section will examine the commencement of Thai nationalism which was stated openly during the reign of King Vajiravudh, the successor of King Chulalongkorn. It will also discuss a byproduct of the nationalist policies, Thaification, the process by which people of different cultures and ethnic origins living in Thailand become assimilated to the dominant culture of the country.

Siamese Nationalism and Thaification

After King Chulalongkorn died in 1910, his successor King Rama VI or Vajiravudh (1910-1924), who had been educated in England and strongly influenced by the debates about nationalism while studying there, created and promoted Siamese

nationalism united by the nation, religion, and kingship. As the king was challenged by the large Chinese immigrant community who took an important role in the growth of the country's economy, he wrote an essay, published in both English and Thai to describe Chinese as "the Jews of the East" who dominated in certain sectors of Siam's economy (Keyes, 1997). Thep (2017), however, points out that this piece of essay has almost always been interpreted as being the king's tool to criticize Chinese immigrants in Siam and to remind the Siamese people to be aware of their threat. He argues that King Vajiravudh's writing did not aim to promote nationalism among Siamese people and turned against Chinese immigrants, but its purpose was to call the Chinese's attention to be aware of their images in the Siamese ruler's eyes and to let them know their responsibilities as citizens of Siam, especially in terms of their cooperation to the Siamese government. No matter what the king aimed to do, he promulgated new laws that required immigrants who sought to be citizens of Siam to forswear allegiance to any other state and to become subjects of the Siamese monarch (Keyes, 1997).

Additionally, in 1921 he passed an act that required all students to learn to speak, read, and write standard Thai and be instructed in their duties as good Siamese citizens, that is, to be loyal to nation, religion, and monarch as can be seen in his voluminous writings (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2018). King Vajiravudh's need of his subjects to share a national heritage (standard Thai), a common religion (Buddhism), and a common relation to the Bangkok monarchy reflects his ideology of Thai nationalism which are the main pillars of Thai nationalism even today. Interestingly, these three pillars are also represented on the tricolor flag which is the national flag designed by King Vajiravudh in 1917. The red color stands for the nation, white for religion, and blue for the monarchy. These three pillars thus have become the features of Thailand's national identity or Thainess (*khwaam pen thai*) which all Thai people are expected to possess and be aware of its virtue.

The standard Thai or Central Thai has taken a significant role in power relations in Thailand since the early Bangkok period. As stated by Saichon (2015), the use of standard Thai suggests the realization of social hierarchy in the structure of Thai society, which the Central Thai elites, comprising of the monarchy, the military, and upper level bureaucrats, are the controlling groups while the commoners are required to do their duties toward their nation but have less power than the former groups. It is obvious that King Vajiravudh, in order to promote Thai nationalism, set out the criteria to judge which race or ethnicity that a person belongs to is based on the language he/she speaks; it reflects his/her loyalty to the nation. Due to this belief, Thainess is determined mainly on whether or not that person can speak standard Thai. Thus, the ethnic minority groups were given a chance to become Thai by speaking Thai in their daily lives. The Primary Education Act of 1932 made the Central Thai the compulsory medium of education. The use of Central Thai in schools resulted in the ethnic minorities' assimilation of Thainess to some extent. Some ethnic minorities wanted to become Thai due to the benefits they derive. For example, a number of Chinese and Laotian minorities wanted to learn standard Thai and Thai customs in order to provide themselves with the opportunities to work in the government. Some ethnic groups, like the Malay Muslims, do not want to become Thai or they might want to, but are not allowed to. Like the case of the mountain people, they are almost always considered as others and as threats to national security.

The year 1939 is often noted as the turning point in Thai history when Phibun,⁷ the Prime Minister, who had been in office at that time and his cabinet, decided to change the country name of Siam to *Muang Thai* or Thailand. This decision was

⁷ Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram alternatively transcribed as Pibulsongkram or Pibulsonggram, locally known as *Chomphon Por*, contemporarily known as Phibun in the West, was the longest serving 3rd Prime Minister of Thailand and fascist leader of Thailand from 1938 to 1944 and 1948 to 1957. In this study, I refer to him by the name that is well known in the West as Phibun.

directed against the ethnic diversity in the country, and was based on the idea of nationalism. Sulak (1991) states that Phibun wanted to create Thai state monopolies. By this, all people were supposed to call themselves Thai whatever their regional or ethnic origin are. Actually, the Phibun regime's assertion of Thainess was an effort to turn against ethnic Chinese by making the Thai people aware of the great extent of their economic dependence upon the Chinese. Chai-anan (1991) notes that the Phibun's nation-state building was a result of the desire to claim jurisdiction over Thai races beyond the existing territory of Siam to the suppression of emergent ethnic Chinese influence in politics and society. It was during this time in Thai history that the Chinese were most marginalized. They were forced to abandon their identity by changing their names into Thai. Many Chinese who were born in Thailand had no right to vote unless they possessed additional qualifications. In addition, the Chinese schools had been regulated by the government.

Phibun's policy of promoting assimilation of Thainess emphasizes the Central Thai domination over the other ethnoregional and ethnic groups. As stated by Diller (1991), "the Thai language cannot escape being an important part of what being Thai means in the sense specified by 'Thailand' " (p. 89). The Primary Education Act of 1932 made the Central Thai the compulsory medium of education and suggests that the Central Thai, whose language is constituted as the national language, has higher status than any other ethnic groups. The Central Thai, therefore, is recognized as standard Thai by which the other regions are supposed to follow. What is referred to as standard Thai is based on the idealized speech of the formally educated elite of Bangkok. Their domination in Thai society lets the Central Thais tend to consider other Thais as both different and inferior. As a result, a number of non-Central Thais sometimes feel inferior to the Central Thais who represent privilege and power of the

nation. Though the country does not have as many serious ethnic conflicts as in other countries in the world, ethnic differences and regionalism are socially and politically significant in Thai society. These differences thus prevent some ethnoregional and ethnic groups from having equal access in economical, educational, political, and other resources.

The idea of Thainess shapes the Thai people's thoughts of others who are non-Thai as others. Thongchai (1994) states that "negative identification" is often used to refer to otherness by identifying it as belonging to other nations. For example, in Thai the term *khaek* is used to call people and countries of Malay Peninsula, South Asia, the East Indians, the Middle East, and Muslims without any distinction. *Farang* is another term which is used to refer to the Western people without any specific nationality. Stereotyping and discrimination against the ethnoregional and ethnic groups are also commonly held and heard. Until recently, many Thais used the offensive term *chek* to refer to Chinese people and Chinese ancestry. The mountain people were originally referred to as *Chao Pa* (forest people), and the term *Chao Khao* (hill tribe) has been used later. The Northerners or Isan people are often referred to as Lao either in an offensive way or in a playful manner. The fact that Isan is the poorest region of Thailand and it is home to majority of Lao descent often make Isan people the target of discrimination. Since Laos is regarded as inferior to Thailand, people from other regions or Bangkokians in particular, habitually look down upon Isan people, seeing them as provincial, poor, low class, dark-skinned, and uneducated. Moreover, Isan people are very often portrayed as domestic workers as well as jokers in movies and TV drama series.

According to Smalley (1994), people of Isan or referred to in his book as "Lao people" for a long time have had a rather negative ethnic self-perception when

comparing themselves with the Central Thais due to their poverty and underdevelopment. The study by Mccargo and Hongladarom (2004) indicates that young and formally educated people of Lao descent prefer to refer to themselves as Thai whereas elder people of Lao descent are rather more likely to express pride in their regional identity. Yongyut's (2013) study of Isan communities in Bangkok reveals that the young people of Isan, whose family moved to Bangkok and have been spending their lives there for a period of time, are no longer aware of their Isaness. Most of them are not even able to speak Lao/Isan-Lao. The findings of these two studies above clearly underpin what Smalley states about negative self-perception of Isan people. Being a victim of discrimination due to their Lao ethnicity, it is possible that the young people of Isan might not want to associate themselves to Isaness in order to avoid being insulted.

Jory (2000), however, argues that there is a cultural resurgence among Thailand's ethnoregional and ethnic groups, particularly in the area of popular culture due to the end of the Cold War and the country's rapid economic development. For example, the ethnic Lao traditional music style has transformed from a folk music origin into a commercialized folk-rock genre. Further, Lao/Isan food which is classified as regional is very popular across the country. Moreover, there is an increase in the use of regional dialects in TV dramas and radio commercials. In addition, Chinese influences are increasing in Thai way of life. For instance, imported Chinese TV shows as well as TV drama series depicting the hardship and success of ethnic Chinese who migrated to Thailand over the last 200 years have become widely accepted by the audience. Chinese language is being taught in Thai schools and universities after a long period of official ignorance. The expression of Malay Muslim identity has increased and Malay language has been reintroduced into public schools. Jury's argument is still absolutely true almost 20 years after he wrote the article.

Nevertheless, I argue that the majority of Thai people still know very little about the existence of particular ethnic groups. Also, I want to point out that most ethnic minorities do not have social equality when some groups must try to become Thai by hiding their own identities in order to not be oppressed by the Thai majority whereas some groups, like Chinese, possesses dual identity both Thai and Chinese since they dominate the country's commerce and have taken over Thailand's entire economy.

Overall, it is obvious that multiculturalism does exist in Thailand, but the country is generally perceived as homogeneous due to the nationalist policies and Thaification. The next sections will consider the situation of multiculturalism as well as the inclusion of multicultural education in the country's educational policy and core curriculum.

Multiculturalism in Thailand

Multiculturalism or the Thai term *พหุวัฒนธรรมนิยม* (*pahu wattanatham niyom*) is deployed by academicians and civil society to challenge the normative discourse of Thai cultural homogeneity and Bangkok cultural domination and administrative centralization (Sirijit, 2013). Though there is an increase of interest in ethnic and cultural diversity in the Thai modern state, the official discourse of multiculturalism has not been on the official agenda within the Thai context despite the fact that Thailand has had a long history of cultural diversity. Multiculturalism does exist in the Thai context, but Thailand is domestically and internationally perceived as a homogeneous country. According to the National Statistical Office (2016), 97.5% of the population in Thailand have Thai nationality, 94.6% are Buddhists, and 96.6% can read and write Thai. These census figures are deceptive as pointed out by Keyes (1997) that the Thai censuses have never asked questions about ethnic self-identification like

in other countries such as in the United States. The overall population characteristics as shown above results in the perception of homogeneity in Thailand which, in fact, has been shaped by Thai nationalism and nation state building.

However, Sirijit (2013) states that there is an increase in discussions about ethnic and cultural diversity as well as the right of the ethnic minorities in academia and mainstream culture in the past two decades. It is noteworthy that since the year 1997 there have been more academic writings and national conferences on diversity issues. Moreover, in 2007 the Indigenous People of Thailand Network was set up with support of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. Further, two regional organizations, the Indigenous Knowledge People Foundation and the Asia Indigenous Peoples Foundation (AIPP), were established in Chiang Mai, a province in Northern Thailand. In terms of policy, there is an attempt by the Royal Society of Thailand to review the national language policy as a medium of school instruction. In spite of the increase in attentiveness of cultural diversity in Thailand, there is still a limitation in supporting the rights of ethnic minorities. This limitation has happened because each government sector works individually and is less likely to cooperate. Importantly, up until now the Thai government has never had the national policy that supports a multicultural state. Interestingly, though there is the establishment of the Indigenous People of Thailand Network, the term “indigenous people” is not officially accepted by the Thai government. Thus, multiculturalism is still a new concept in Thai society, and people in this society need to learn more about it.

Education Policy and Core Curriculum in Thailand

The Basic Education Curriculum 2008 currently serves as the core curriculum for national education at the basic level. Pupils are required to take credits in the core subjects including Thai language, mathematics, science, social studies, religion and

culture, physical education, art, occupations and technology, and foreign languages. The national curriculum focuses on learners' development for attainment of the desirable characteristics which includes love of nation, religion, and king as well as cherishing Thainess. Learning Thai language (standard Thai) is explained as the way to attain national unity and strengthen Thainess in Thai people's character (Minister of Education, Thailand, 2008). In terms of social studies, religion and culture, the study area which focuses on principles of Buddhism or those of learners' religion and cultural differences and diversity, indicates that the current educational policy pays more attention to diversity and embraces multicultural education.

However, the multicultural education policy in Thailand is still superficial and needs more development. A study by Thithimadee (2018) reveals that an acceptance of cultural diversity is merely another form of assimilation since the established features that define Thainess remain intact in the national curriculum. Additionally, the inclusion of multicultural content that has been added to the curriculum is mostly perfunctory and insufficient to change the unequal power relations among dominant and ethnic minority groups in Thailand. In her study, Thithimadee examines multicultural education policy by obtaining data from eight primary schools that served religiously and ethnically diverse students, including Muslim, Buddhist, Burmese, Cambodian, and Thai in the Southern provinces of Thailand.

The findings in her study indicate that in recent years the Thai government has attempted to improve the quality of education for both Muslim and migrant children. In terms of Muslim children, the government has provided Islamic studies for Muslims, as Pondok education institutes.⁸ Moreover, the Ministry of Education permitted an

⁸ The Pondok schools, or referred to as Pono schools in standard Thai, are Muslim schools in Southern Thailand.

increase in the amount of time in school day for Islamic studies in public schools. It is noteworthy that this policy was developed after the violent incidents in the area of three southern border provinces in Thailand, including Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat in 2004. Then, it has been adopted only in these three spots and in some other provinces where the Muslim students outnumber Buddhist students. The current national policy also provides opportunity for children of migrant workers to access free public education. Due to the government's reluctance to promote this policy to the target groups, however, only 25% of migrant children had been enrolled in public schools.

The results also show that many schools in the border provinces have developed bilingual education programs (Thai-Malay) that use students' mother tongues as a medium of instruction. The government, though, does not prohibit the use of students' native languages as in the past, it does not have any concrete policy to support bilingual education. Additionally, the findings indicate that even though the national curriculum includes multicultural content, it only addresses basic elements such as food, dress, architecture, and festivals. Moreover, schools are allowed to apply their rules and regulations that correspond with their culturally diverse students regarding school holidays, uniforms, and disciplinary issues that fits with students' cultural background. The findings also reveal that the areas where the Muslim cultural politics are strong, as in the three southern border provinces, most schools set rules that correspond with Islamic conventions while these same things do not occur in schools in other provinces where the majority of students are Muslims.

Thithimadee argues that the Thai government adopts multicultural education policy as just a way to manage cultural diversity to correspond to today's political climate which does not allow the suppression of cultural diversity. The multicultural education policy in Thailand thus needs to be developed alongside the concept of

multiculturalism. I argue that despite the fact that Thailand is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in Southeast Asia, the Thai government has not officially done anything to drive policies of multiculturalism to facilitate the various ethnic communities in the country. As a result, the discourse of multiculturalism is seldomly heard in the country. In terms of literature, the genre of multicultural literature never exists in Thai literary work.

In the following section I will explore the history of Thai children's and young adult literature to understand what the young Thai people read from the past until the present. This investigation will expose the role of books for children in Thai society. In addition, I examine the availability of books about ethnoregional and ethnic groups written for young readers.

Historical Background of Thai Children's and Young Adult Literature

The history of Thai children's literature in the earlier days was not much different from children's literature of many countries. As there were no particular books written for children, most of them shared the same tales with adults. In the Western world, John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* are some examples of books which were originally written for adults but have become popular among children (Temple et al., 2015). However, prior to the invention of printing, oral tradition was the only way that tales were passed down to both adults and children. Oral tradition for Thai children includes folktales, myths, proverbs, and lullabies. Even after books were written or printing became wide spread, most tales were originally created for adults and later adapted for young readers.

Books for Thai children in the earlier period were written in verse and recorded on palm-leaf manuscripts (*bailan*) and mainly focused on moral and religious messages. The famous tales for both children and adults were from classic Thai literature like

The Story of Phra Ahpai Mani and *The Story of Khun Chang Khun Phaen*. The former was written by Thailand's best known poet, Sunthorn Phu,⁹ and the latter was created by several members of the literary salon of King Rama II.¹⁰ Sunthorn Phu is credited as the first Thai writer of children's literature because some of his books were purposely written for the royal children. Among these were *Pleng Yao Tawai Owat* [*Didactic Poetry for Princes*], *Sawasdiraksa* [*Children's Duties*], and *Supasit Sorn Ying* [*Proverbs for Young Ladies*] (Chaweewan, 1994).

Due to the establishment of the Ministry of Education in 1892, the publishing of both textbooks and storybooks for children increased significantly. However, the eagerness for publishing children's books started to decline in 1929 when more adult fiction books were published instead. Importantly, the Siamese coup d'état in 1932 and the Asia Pacific War between 1940 and 1943 also had a big impact on the decline in the publication of children's books. After that, books for children were published regularly by the Ministry of Education. Further, there has been an increase of publishers that have published books for children. In 1950 there was also the beginning of translation of children's books from other languages such as *The Little Women*, *Heidi*, and *Little House Books* (Chaweewan, 1994).

The year 1972 was considered a significant year in the history of Thai children's books when UNESCO declared it the International Book Year. Thailand celebrated this book year enthusiastically by organizing the first National Book Fair which has been an annual event since then. The National Book Fair has played an important role in the development of children's books in Thailand because all private agencies and organizations involved in books and reading such as Thailand Library

⁹ Sunthorn Phu was honored by UNESCO as a great world poet in the 200th anniversary of his birth in 1876.

¹⁰ Sunthorn Phu was one of the members of the literary salon of King Rama II, the second monarch of Siam under the Chakri dynasty, ruling from 1809 to 1824.

Associations, the Publishers and Book Distributors Association as well as embassies and government agencies are involved. Importantly, awards have been offered for the best books of the year, including books for children. Resulting from organizing the National Book Fair is a growing number of authors, translators, and illustrators of children's books (Ampha, 1991).

About four decades ago Suphattra (1979) pointed out that there was a lack of good books for children since most children's books were written by part-time authors. Moreover, she claimed that there was a lack of support in the production of children's books from those who got involved. For example, the academic conferences and seminars on children's literature as well as the journals, articles, and exhibitions about children's books were small in number. A minimal amount of the awards for children's books had been established. In terms of publishing, there was only one government publishing house that published books for children particularly while a small number of the private publishing houses published children's books as well as adult books. It is worth mentioning that some publishing houses published cheap, low quality books to attract young people's attention. These books have poor qualities because they include sexually provocative, violent, or horrific contents. Children whose family were not able to afford good quality books for them bought these books to fulfill their love of reading.

According to Ampha (1991), a survey of the children's book market conducted around the time she presented her paper in a 1988 conference reveals that half of the books written for children at that time were translated or based on the plots taken from western literary works. Most of the books were folktales, legends, myths, and fairy tales. About 25% were Thai folktales and the rest were modern stories. Interestingly, most books have the didactic purposes, that is, to teach moral lessons to children. The

results from the survey thus indicate that the emphasis of books written for Thai children is still placed on a didactic purpose which is the same focus as in the olden days.

It is quite obvious that the translated literary works are still the popular books among young Thai readers today. This phenomenon is still the same as in the past. The only difference is that the translated literary works today are not mainly from Europe and the United States, but also from Japan, and Korea. Books written by Thai authors are less in both quantity¹¹ and popularity.

In terms of quantity, authors and illustrators who create books for young people are still small in number. This shortage might come from the fact that writing good books for young readers is difficult, and the market for this genre of books are limited if compared to the market for adult's books. It is worth mentioning that notable authors like Mala Khamchan and Chamlong Fangchonchit, to name a few, though they create fiction books for young readers, most of their famous books were written for adult readers. Moreover, there is still a small number of publishing houses that specialize in publishing books just for young readers. Most publishers of children's and young adult books are the subsidiaries of major publishing companies. Regarding the book awards, there is still a small number of awards which aim at giving the prizes specifically to the creators of children's and young adult books. Most prizes are part of the awards for literature in general.¹²

Concerning the popularity issue, the study by Haruthai (1999) suggests that Thai children's books still concentrate on teaching moral lessons to children while the contents of translated books are varied. Furthermore, it was found that the publishers

¹¹ I tried to find the most recent statistics of publications to support this claim from the Publishers and Booksellers Association of Books of Thailand and the National Library of Thailand. Unfortunately, none of the organizations could provide me with the number of books for children's and young adult published in each year.

¹² See Appendices C and D.

of Thai and translated books have different markets. The markets for Thai literary works are school libraries whereas the translated books markets are book stores. Haruthai argues that there is a lack of Thai fantasy fiction while there is a demand of this genre in Thai children's books markets. We have learned from this study that the concentration on ethic and morality confines Thai children's literature just in school libraries. Thai children read books written by Thai authors because they are required to read in classes. Whenever they can choose books they want to read by their own, translated books provide them with more choices to choose from.

In her article, Reunruthai (2005) supports Thai children's need of fantasy when she points out that since the release of the first novel, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* in 1997, the book series by J. K. Rowling has captured the hearts and imagination of young readers all over the world including those in Thailand. Since then fantasy has become the most popular genre among young readers all over the world and also plays an important role in Thai children's and young adult books. The popularity of this genre inspired a number of Thai authors to create more fantasy novels to appeal to young Thai readers.

The survey research on Thai youths' opinions concerning national award-winning fiction books for preteenagers by Suphanni (2004), reveals that most national award winning books in the survey are unknown to most respondents. It was also found that the contents of most award-winning books are about family and rural life while most of the respondents like reading books about adventure, superstition, life experience, humor, environment, and history. The results of this survey research indicate that most award-winning books might be considered as good quality books due to their values and advantages to the readers, but their contents do not meet the young readers' needs. As a result, most young respondents' favorite books are those

translated literary works such as *Harry Potter*, *Lord of the Rings*, *The Famous Five*, and *Sherlock Holmes*.

Overall, the situation of children's and young adult books in Thailand is still problematic. Though there is a new horizon for Thai children, books written for them are still in the development stage. Books written by Thai authors are still few in number, and this rarity results in a lack of good Thai literary works for Thai children. Due to the small number of children's books by Thai authors as mentioned above, books that represent the ethnoregional and ethnic groups are even much smaller in number. My search of books about these groups of people found that there is a small amount of books about the ethnoregional groups, the mountain people, and the Malay Muslims while books about other ethnic groups are very rare. Only a single book about Vietnamese, Urak Lawoi, Mani or Maniq,¹³ and Tai Yai is found. It is worth mentioning that only three books about ethnoregional and ethnic groups are included on the list of external reading that the Office of the Basic Education Commission (2015) under the Ministry of Education has selected for teachers to assign their students to read in Thai classes. Two books about Isan people are *Kham Ai* and *Luk Isan*, and a single book about the Malay Muslims is *Phisuea Lae Dokmai*.¹⁴

The following sections will present a critical review of the research studies about ethnoregional and ethnic groups in Thai children's and young adult literature. Due to a dearth of research studies about these groups of people in literature for children and young adult, I also examine research studies about ethnoregional and ethnic groups in Thai literature for adults.

¹³ This ethnic group is more widely known in Thailand as the Sakai or *Nogh*.

¹⁴ See more details about these three books in Chapter 3.

Research Studies about Ethnoregional and Ethnic Groups in Thai Literature

As mentioned earlier, there is a lack of books about the ethnoregional and ethnic groups in Thai children's and young adult literature. Consequently, research studies about these groups of people are very small in number. Therefore, my literature review in this section includes research studies about ethnoregional and ethnic groups in both Thai children's and young adult literature as well as studies about Thai literature for adults. I aim to examine how these groups of people are represented in these research studies. The review also explores major research focus of children's and young adult literature in Thailand. Further, it investigates how the research literatures consider the power relations of ethnicity, class, and gender represented in the books written for children and young adults as well as for adults

Studies about Thai Children's and Young Adult Literature

According to Ampha (1991), a review of research studies was done on books for children in Thailand since 1972. That year was significant as it was when Thai children's literature started receiving more attention, as mentioned earlier. This trend continued on until the time she presented her paper on children's books in Thailand at the First International Youth Library (IYL) Conference 1988 in Munich. Her review shows that most research studies were usually conducted by library science instructors and students for their master's degree theses. There were no academicians in other disciplines paying attention to children's books. She stated that there have been 22 studies done on children's literature since 1972 which focused on the following issues:

1. Shape of the books, size, and types of scripts, illustrations and the use of color;
2. Content of the books, which is grouped into three categories: tales, fairytales and legends of Thai or foreign origin; documentaries; and stories

- with children as the main protagonists which aim mostly at teaching children to be good persons as defined according to values in Thai society;
3. Journals for children and adolescents, including comic books, which are being produced in large numbers and are popular among young readers at present; and,
 4. Interests of children who are readers of these various types of books, which vary according to their age. (p. 147)

Ampha's review suggests that there is a small number of research studies in the field of children's literature in the past three decades. Moreover, the research focus was limited to just the form and content as well as children's interest.

After three decades, however, some findings are still true while some have changed alongside the context. What has remained the same for the past 30 years is that most of the research studies on children's books in Thailand are being conducted as part of master's degree theses. Nowadays, however, scholars from fields other than library science, namely humanities, education, and communication arts, also pay more attention to children's literature. Interestingly, none of the studies included in this review were conducted in the library science field. Most of the research studies found are master's degree theses conducted by Thai students in Thai universities while only one is a doctoral dissertation conducted by a Thai student in a U.S. university. One study was conducted by a Thai scholar in the field of Thai literature. My review of literature focuses on the research studies on children's literature in the genre of realistic fiction. The studies included in the review were conducted after Ampha's presentation. In addition, I reviewed the studies on literature for adults that focus on ethnoregional and ethnic groups to help me further the inquiry.

There are a few studies that examined images and portrayals of youth characters. Namkhang (1997) analyzed images of children in 27 award-winning books in the National Book Fair of 1987 to 1993. It was found that the male protagonists outnumber females. Most books depict characters brought up in low-socioeconomic, middle-class,

and upper-class families respectively. Mercifulness was found to be the most prevalent ethical value that was taught to children through these books. In addition, this study examines writing techniques through characters' language use. The findings reveal that characters use language that represents their social class, circumstances, and locality.

A study by Haruthai (1999) investigated the portrayal of youth through the forms and contents of 146 Thai and translated books for young adults published between 1996 and 1998. The in-depth interviews were also conducted with five editors of the most popular publishers in Thailand to find the factors that impacts the editors' decision to publish the books. The findings indicate that 83.57% of Thai children's books were written in the genre of realistic fiction while only 13.43% were fantasy. The translated children's books, however, were written in the genre of realistic fiction proportionately with the genre of fantasy. The findings show that Thai children's books concretely present the problems which occur from external factors, and those problems were also presented straightforwardly and repetitively through narrations and characters which led to the lack of progress in narratives and character developments. It was also found that the youth and adult characters in Thai children's books always interact with one another in the role of "receiver" and "provider," which results in the portrayal of the Thai youth as passive characters in most situations. The translated children's books, on the other hand, are different from Thai children's books in most respects. The in-depth interviews with the editors reveal that most Thai authors still lack understanding of youth readers and create works which directly instruct to please both parents and librarians, and also provide them with more opportunities to win book awards.

Another study by Pattrakwan (2011) examined the images of marginalized people and the techniques of their presentations in 20 young adult novels which have

the marginalized youth as the main character published between 1978 and 2009. The findings show the image of marginalized people in three contexts. The geographical and ethnic context includes the mountain people, sea nomads, and the Vietnamese refugees. The marginalized people in economic context are beggars, vagabonds, and laborers. The last group of marginalized people are those in social and cultural contexts. They are orphans, disabled children, and Malay Muslims who are different from Thai Buddhists in terms of ethnicity, religion, culture, and way of life. The images of marginalized people are presented through plot, characterizations by the writers' direct descriptions or characters' roles, and setting and atmosphere.

The small number of research studies above suggest that the depiction of young characters in books written for young readers is not a major focus for researchers in the field of children's and young adult literature in Thailand. Only two studies were found and they were conducted about 20 years ago. Interestingly, books that depict ethnic minority communities have never been of any interest to researchers in the field of children's and young adult literature until the early 21st century. Nevertheless, the study by Pattrakwan seems to be a single study which I found through my literature review.

The other research studies apart from those previously mentioned, have several different focuses. To begin with, Boonsri (1993) and Nuanjan (2007) examined the contents of books. The former one used content analysis to investigate prosocial and aggressive content in 100 books to see how this content relates to societal problems in contemporary Thailand. The study indicates that prosocial behavior occurred in 92 books. Caring is the most common type of prosocial behavior performed by the characters in most books. In regard to aggressive behavior, it occurred in 55 books. The analysis reveals that male characters are much more likely to engage in aggressive

behavior than female characters, and there are few instances of male characters engaging in constructive solutions to problems. Furthermore, middle-class or lower-class characters were found to be more frequently engaged in prosocial behavior than upper-class individuals while lower-class individuals engaged in aggressive behavior much more frequently than middle-class and upper-class individuals. The latter one analyzed the contents and concepts of 12 books for children published in 2004. In terms of contents, most books contain five issues: rural ways of life of farmers and sea nomads in the Southern region, regional tradition of the South and the North, children behavioral problems, adventure and fantasy, and social conditions that affect children's lives. Regarding concepts, the four issues found were the concepts of ethics, conserving nature and environment, conserving tradition and culture, and war and peace. Of these four concepts, the concept of ethics is most frequently found in the form of mercy, kindness, bravery and sacrifice, gratitude, and unity.

A study by Boonsri (1993) is the only research study that was found to be conducted in the field of children's literature as part of a doctoral dissertation outside Thailand. It is not surprising that the categories for the analysis of characters' characteristics in her study include type, age, and social status, but not ethnicity since ethnic diversity was not the main focus in her analysis. A study by Nuanjan (2007) also includes books about Northerners and Southerners as well as sea nomads in the Southern region. However, her study pays attention to just contents and concepts of these books. A number of studies pay attention to literary elements in the books. Phatcharee (1996) analyzed the style in 36 children's book winners in the National Book Fair of 1979 to 1992 to see how the language use is appropriate to the age of children and to inculcate the concept of morality. Jaruwanee (2000) explored 15 pre-adolescent books awarded in the National Book Fair of 1995 to 1999 by analyzing plot, characters, setting, dialogues, language use, the content and concepts, and the social

circumstances reflected in the books. Krisataya (2001) studied themes and techniques in 71 titles of pre-teenage books which won the awards given by the National Literary Development Committee during 1979 to 1999. Kuntika (2013) analyzed a connection between genres and contents as well as the artistic elements of 15 books that won the three significant awards for children's literature in Thailand: Book Awards of Office of the Basic Education Commission under the Ministry of Education, Wankaew Award, and Naiin Award, between 2003 and 2012.

The research studies in this category outnumber the studies in other categories in my review. The studies reviewed above are just some sample studies of those similar studies found in my search. Studies by Krisataya and Jaruwanee include a few books about ethnoregional and ethnic groups in their text collection.

A small number of studies emphasize the ethical and moral aspects found in the books. A study by Anusara (2009) examined the didactic aspects, the narrative techniques, and the values of the seven titles that won Naiin Award for young people literature between 2001 and 2004. Another study by Jeerapat and Siriwan (2016) used content analysis to analyze the didactics of kindness in 87 titles that won Book Awards of the Office of the Basic Education Commission under the Ministry of Education, Naiin Award, Wankaew Award, 7 Book Award, and Rakluke Award¹⁵

A study by Supasinee (2014) investigated 12 books that were published between 2002 and 2011 to find out how Thai traditional literature and tales were inherited in books written for young Thai readers by studying the literary elements. The findings show that all the books in this study were written by using characters, settings, and plots in Thai traditional literature and tales. In terms of characters and settings, the original characters and settings were conserved in the first method and

¹⁵ This award no longer exists.

were recreated in the second method. In regard to plots, referring and subrogation were the two methods found in the sample books. Referring was to enhance roles of characters and conflicts in stories and also to elucidate. For subrogation, it was used for new interpretation on old tradition and on modern society.

Two books included in Jeerapat and Siriwan's study are about ethnoregional and ethnic groups written for children which I do not include in my text collection. Books analyzed in Supasinee's study are those novels which were written based on Thai traditional literature and tales, therefore, no books about ethnoregional and ethnic groups were considered in her study.

My search for research studies on children's and young adult literature in Thailand in the past two decades indicates that there is a fairly small number of them in this field from the late 20th century throughout the present time. Interestingly, most of the studies are master's degree theses in Thai. Moreover, many researchers choose to analyze the book winners of significant awards in Thailand including Wankaeo Award, Naiin Award, 7 Book Award, Rakluke Award, and the award provided by the Office of the Basic Education Commission under the Ministry of Education.¹⁶ Their selection practices suggest a belief in the value of award that winners of significant awards might guarantee a book's quality and appropriateness for young readers, especially in terms of promoting ethical and moral development as it is almost always expected in Thai society.

I classify those research studies in my review into five categories. The first category includes studies that pay attention to the images and portrayal of youth characters (Haruthai, 1999; Namkhang, 1997; Pattrakwan, 2011). The focus in second category is the contents and concepts of books (Boonsri, 1993; Nuanjan, 2007). The

¹⁶ See Appendix C.

third category focuses on literary elements in the books. Some of the studies analyze several elements such as plot, characters, setting, point of view, and theme (Jaruwanee, 2000; Kuntika, 2013) while some limit their interests in just specific elements (Krisataya, 2001; Phatcharee, 1996). The fourth category emphasizes the ethical and moral aspects found in the books (Anusara, 2009; Jeerapat & Siriwan, 2016). The last category is those studies which have other focal points rather than the four categories mentioned earlier. There is a single study included in this category (Supasinee, 2014). However, some studies also analyze the literary elements as well as the content and concepts of the books to indicate how the authors convey the moral messages to the young readers as can be seen in studies by Jaruwanee (2000), Namkhang, (1997), Nuanjan (2007), and Phatcharee (1996).

Overall, the majority of the research studies on children's and young adult literature in Thailand were analyzed based on literary approach which focuses on the aesthetic aspects of the text such as plot, characters and characterizations, setting, theme, and language use. The analysis based on this approach pays attention to just text while ignoring the outside factor sources such as the author's background as well as historical and cultural context, to fully understand the text. It is evident that most researchers applied the New Criticism in their analyses. This critical approach was a formalist movement in literary theory which was pervasive in the United States from the late 1930s to the late 1950s. The English critics I. A. Richards and William Empson as well as the English poet T. S. Eliot made contributions to the development of the New Criticism. It uses "close reading" to understand how various elements in a literary text work together to shape its effects on the reader. Actually, the New Critics focused mainly on poetry. They viewed a poem as an object in itself which was cut off from

both the author and the world outside. However, in later times, the New Criticism was extended to include analysis of prose fiction (Carter, 2006).

As mentioned earlier, most of the studies were conducted in the field of humanities or Thai language and literature, in particular. Thus, I assume that the researchers might limit their studies within the literary approach, which they are familiar with. As the New Criticism has been widely admired as a critical approach in literature in many countries, including Thailand, it has influenced the Thai scholars of literature for a long time and its influence has been passed to the students in the field. Additionally, the review of research studies suggests that the role of children's literature in Thai society is not that different from the past. Thai adults in the modern time still use it merely as a tool to teach and socialize children morally without paying attention to social issues embedded in children's literature.

There are a small number of research studies that try to understand children's literature from different approaches. A study by Haruthai (1999) is a single research conducted in the field of communication art and the only one that compares Thai children's literature to children's literature in other cultures. Haruthai applied the main concepts of structuralism and semiotics, that is, the distinction between "langue" and "parole" to consider the texts in her work. While "langue" is the language system that is understood by a social group, "parole" is language as experienced in individual utterances. Based on this concept, Haruthai argues that the characters in children's literature are part of "langue" which make this literary genre unique whereas the images of youth in each cultural group is "parole" which has its specific features. A study by Pattrakwan (2011) is the only work that addresses diversity issues. The researcher examines the images of marginalized people in her study using a sociological approach. By this, she pays attention to the context in which the characters are related to.

Supasinee's (2014) work, though, examines the plot, characters, setting, and themes of children's books, these elements are analyzed based on postmodernism's concern with intertextuality or the reworking of earlier works. In addition, the concepts of cultural legacy of postcolonialism and imperialism were used to confirm the value of traditional Thai literature and the legacy of tales.

Most of the ethnic groups in Pattrakwan's study are portrayed as those who have a different way of life from the mainstream, and these differences marginalize them from being recognized and unable to have access to fundamental rights, resources, and services as the state citizen. These differences finally distance these people from the mainstream and even lead the two groups to misunderstand one another. The portrayal of marginalized groups in this study, as Pattrakwan (2011) argues, is the authors' intention to provide the readers with an opportunity to learn more about diverse groups in their country as well as reflect the problems of these people which are commonly known but ignored by the mainstream. I argue that the repetition of the same problems that these people have to experience, on the one hand, might reflect the undeniable fact of Thailand; on the other hand, it repetitively portrays these people as poor, undeveloped, disadvantaged, and sympathetic. Moreover, I argue that the authors' repetitive reflections of some ethnic groups' problems in their works is an overlap of truth and stereotyping as Cai (2002) states, "[T]he nature of stereotypes as partial truth makes the distinction between stereotype and realistic portrayal very difficult" (p.75). The problems of these ethnic minorities have been recycled whenever these people have been referred to in any study, which do not explicitly focus on them. A study by Kritsataya (2001) is a good example since one of the themes found in her analysis of the books for pre-teenagers includes the problems of the ethnic minority as one of the main problems found among the themes of children's problems.

Studies about Thai Literature for Adults

Due to a lack of research studies on ethnoregional and ethnic groups in Thai children's and young adult literature as mentioned previously, research on Thai literature for adults, which is relevant to this issue, is needed to help me better understand my inquiry. Unfortunately, only a few studies were found. In the following paragraphs, I review them in the chronological order.

Prasert (1989) investigated Khamphun Bunthawi's 14 novels, 36 short stories in four collections, and 39 short stories published in *Pha Muang Thai* magazine from 1985 to 1986 to analyze the values, the beliefs, and the art of writing reflected in his writings. The findings indicate that Khamphun's works reflect the local color of the Northeast. They are rich with life and customs of the region. The local materials originated from his own experience as a native of Isan. The Northeasterners' way of life and life styles portrayed in his works are simple and traditional. Most of his characters love nature and cling to the old beliefs. Though these people are poor, they live happily without any bitterness.

Pinampai (2000) studied a total of 18 novels that have ethnic minorities as characters to examine the evolution of the portrayal of these minorities in Thai novels written between 1977 and 1997. The findings reveal that prior to 1977 the minorities appeared as minor characters in adventure novels, as heroines in romantic novels, and as heroes in novels that have themes of loyalty to the king. The minority characters in the novels written in this period thus were not depicted as cultural representatives of minority groups. The images of minorities were more clearly delineated between 1977 and 1987 since they were presented as major characters. However, the images of minorities in these novels were still those of the governed and underdeveloped. The images of minorities became more diversified in the novels from 1988 to 1997. The

details of their social and cultural identities were more nuanced, and modernization was an important theme in these novels.

Another study by Nipapat (2006) examined the reflections of the Northern people's way of life in Mala Khamchan's 35 short stories. The findings reveal that the Northerners' way of life was reflected in five aspects including the economic and social aspect, the cultural aspect, the religious aspect, the educational aspect, and the political aspect. It was also found that the Northern people's way of life is reflected through three techniques including point of view, characters, and settings.

A small number of research studies on the ethnoregional and ethnic groups in Thai literature for adults suggests that these people are invisible to Thai researchers not only in the field of children's and young adult literature, but also in the study of literature in general. As there is a lack of research on ethnoregional groups while research on ethnic groups is also rare, a small number of studies as mentioned above, at least help shed light on the understanding of the depictions of these people in Thai literature.

The traditional values found in Khamphun's works suggest that the Isan people are those who enjoy social gatherings like festivals, celebrations, musical performances, storytelling, and so forth. They value a woman who is hard-working and good at housework, and also value a man who is hard-working and can take a good care of his family. The people of this region are kind and always happy to share what they have to others who are not even their relatives. Moreover, they respect the elderly, monks, and educated people. They are portrayed as Buddhists, but also believe in superstition, magic spells, charms and amulets, and the effect of natural phenomenon on their lives. Most Isan people use home remedies to heal their illness. The values and beliefs reflected in Khamphun's works suggest that most Isan people live simply in their

traditional way of life. Though they live in poverty, they still enjoy their lives in the way they would be able to.

The Northern people's way of life in Mala's short stories is reflected in many aspects. However, I focus only on the aspects that help me understand the portrayal of the Northerners. The houses they live, the food they eat, the work they do, for example, not only suggest that they live a simple and traditional life, but also in poverty. Most people of the North in Mala's short stories live in small huts, eat the local food, and work on farms. Poverty thus is portrayed as the major problem of people in the remote area of the North, and it is the cause of any other problems such as debt, family issues, education, and health care. The same as the Northeasterners in Khamphun's works, the Northern people are depicted as Buddhist, but they also believe in animism and superstition. Additionally, they believe that home remedies can be used to heal sick people.

Actually, poverty is the major problem of the country people in any region. However, the study by Prasert (1989) does not refer to this social issue as in the study by Nipapat (2006). Apparently, Khamphun's works aim at telling about Isan people's life from his own experiences rather than reflecting their socioeconomic status. On the contrary, Mala's works aim to reflect the Northern people's way of life through several aspects including social and economic aspects. It is evident that the way these two researchers define culture shape how they read the books. While the former views culture as a structure in terms of a whole way of life as well as a function that provides guidance to survival, the latter sees it as merely a whole way of life.

Pinampai's (2000) study was conducted in a field of comparative literature and is another study among a few that draw attention to the ethnic groups. Though the study does not solely focus on minorities in books for young readers, it includes several

sample titles of young adult books. The minority characters found in most Thai novels in the study are the mountain people in the Northern region and the Malay Muslims in the border provinces of the Southern region. The images of the minorities in her study were found to have developed positively from the past, and this development suggests that the minorities are portrayed with better understanding than before.

The three studies in the category of adult literature were conducted based on the sociological approach. Most studies examine the texts in cultural, economic, and political context in which the characters exist and have influences upon their lives. The research on the ethnoregional and ethnic groups in Thai literature for adults thus pays attention to context as in some research studies on children's and young adult literature.

Every single person or group is positioned in a structure of race, class, and gender relations, the focus of this literature review, in a specific time and place. Race, class, and gender thus are viewed as the simultaneous processes that shape all social relations. In terms of power, these three dimensions also intersect to produce differing power relations in society (Yang, 2000). My review of literature found that the power relations of ethnicity, class, and gender are implicitly represented in some research studies on Thai literature.

In Boonsri's (1993) study, the power relations of gender and class are considered since her analysis reveals that male characters were found much more likely to engage in aggressive behavior than female characters, and lower-class individuals were found to engage in aggressive behavior much more frequently than the middle-class and upper-class people. The findings in this study suggest that both gender and class are stereotypically depicted. Thai women are almost always expected to have good manners, be polite, kind, and unaggressive, whereas Thai men are almost always anticipated to be strong and bold. Regarding class, lower-class people in Thai society

are also stereotyped as those who are likely to attack anyone to solve problems as opposed to using reasons due to their lack of education and good guidance.

Namkhang's study (1997) is another work that let us consider the power relations of class and gender when the findings show that the female protagonists were underrepresented in the sampled children's books in her analysis. The findings also reveal that the use of language in the books was chosen to suit the characters' social class. These findings suggest that people are expected to use different types of language regarding to their social class. Lower-class people then are expected to use profanity while middle-classes and upper-classes use only polite language.

Pattrakwan's (2011) study considers the power relations of ethnicity represented by the ethnic minority groups who are oppressed due to their ethnicity. Her analysis shows that being an ethnic group other than Thai restricts the ethnic minorities from being treated equally as Thai citizens in terms of education, health care, occupation, and so on.

Regarding the research studies on literature for adults, the power relations of gender can be considered in a study by Prasert (1989). The analysis reveals Khamphun's reflections of the Northeasterners in terms of their gender values that males are expected to earn their living to support the family members while females are anticipated to be good housewives. These gender values suggest the stereotypical gender roles of men and women as expected by the society.

The power relations of ethnicity are considered in a study by Pinampai (2000) since the findings reveal that prior to 1977, the minorities appeared as minor characters in Thai novels. In the later period, they became the major characters and were portrayed as those who had conflict with the dominant group. The power relations of gender are also considered by means of reflections of the minorities' culture and way of life. The findings indicate that the mountain people communities, both the Akha and Hmong, are

depicted as a male-dominated community since the men are supposed to be the leader of the family while the women are likely to take care of their husbands and children as well as being responsible for domestic chores. The power relation of class is considered through the youth characters who do not have equality of educational opportunity like those of the mainstream population due to their low-socioeconomic status.

Since most of the researchers do not view children's literature as a cultural product, they consider the texts in isolation from their contexts. The findings of my literature review clearly reveal that a decontextualized literary study is not sufficient for understanding children's books as cultural products. Though some studies analyze texts using a sociological approach and pay attention to context, they do not consider power, which is exercised within discourses, as part of it. As a result, the power relations of ethnicity, class, and gender are implicitly represented only in a few studies.

The findings of my literature review thus affirm that there is a need for a shift in literary study practices in the field of children's literature. Also, a critical analysis of power relations is crucial for studying Thai children's and young adult literature because it provides insight into how the dominant ideologies about ethnicity, class, and gender work in Thai society. Critical multicultural engagement with these texts also creates spaces to resist and reconstruct hegemonic relations in these stories and, by extension, in Thai society. The findings then inspire me to employ critical multicultural analysis to examine power relations in Thai children's and young adult literature. I will discuss this epistemology in the next section.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I discuss the methodology employed in this dissertation. I first begin by theorizing critical multicultural analysis of children's literature which is used as an analytical tool to analyze data of text collection. Then, I write about how I collect data and describe the data sources and book selection. Next, I elaborate on my procedures of analyzing data. The chapter ends with the discussion of translation practices

Critical Multicultural Analysis

Drawing on Foucault's key questions about power, this study applies critical multicultural analysis as an epistemology to examine how power is exercised in Thai young adult literature about ethnoregional and ethnic groups. As stated by Botelho and Rudman (2009), "critical" demands reading beyond the text and calls attention to the balance of power in society and its organization. In addition, "critical" asks us to consider the use of language in the text since how we use language shapes perceptions and social processes. "Multicultural" allows us to realize the diversity and fluidity of cultural experience and unequal access to social power among us. Critical multicultural analysis therefore provides the readers with a multilayered lens to develop multiple analyses of the texts. It asks the readers to not simply read the books, but also consider the context in which children's and young adult books are written and published. Botelho and Rudman (2009) argue that critical multicultural analysis focuses mainly on reading about power and provides readers with the tools to understand "how power is exercised, circulated, negotiated, and reconstructed" (p. 117) as the characters use language and participate socially, and how the social construction of the text represents these relations.

As stated by Guinier and Torres (2002), there is a zero-sum power. When an individual or group has more power, there is less for everyone else. Critical multicultural analysis theorizes that domination, collusion, resistance, and agency are the four positions that form a continuum of how a person or institution exercises power. Domination is power over someone or something. Collusion is internalized oppression or domination. Resistance is the act of challenging oppressive practices. Agency is power with someone or something.

According to critical multicultural analysis, the power relations of race, class, and gender need to be explored in books for children in order to understand how power works and what role language and other social practices have in its circulation, interruption, and reconstruction. Through this analytical lens, critical multicultural analysis pays attention to the focalization of the story, social processes among the characters, language use, closure of the story, images, genre (s), and historical and sociopolitical context of the story.

As discourse reflects and circulates dominant ideologies that produce and reproduce power relations, it is imperative to analyze the characters' language use and its role in the social processes among the characters. The focalization of the text is considered by examining the point of view from which the story is told since it offers particular reading subject positions connected to race, class, and gender discourses and ideologies. The closure of the story is determined by considering whether the ending is ideologically open or closed. The examination of historical and sociopolitical context is required because they have constructed these texts (Botelho & Rudman, 2009).

In my analysis of text collection, I draw on critical multicultural analysis to analyze the categories described above, except just the categories of genre (s) and images, to examine the power relations of ethnicity, class, and gender in Thai young adult fiction that portray ethnoregional and ethnic groups in Thailand.

Data Collection

I initially collected books in my study, while I was in the United States, from reference books in research literature about Thai children's and young adult literature as well as from a book database in Thailand. Then, during the summer of 2018 I traveled back to collect more data from both primary and secondary sources in my home country in the beginning of June until the end of August. I paid a visit to several different libraries both in Bangkok and its suburbs to research the databases under the category of Thai children's and young adult literature as well as other secondary sources. My visit includes the National Library of Thailand and a number of academic libraries that serve universities which are Chulalongkorn University, Kasetsart University, Srinakharinwirot University, Thammasat University both Thapachan and Rungsit Campuses, and the library of Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University. Also, I traveled to the Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre Library¹⁷ to review their collection of anthropological materials about ethnoregional and ethnic groups. Moreover, I visited several book stores in Bangkok to review their children's and young adult literature collection on ethnoregional and ethnic groups. In addition, I attended the Thai Institution under the Bureau of Academic Affairs and Educational Standards, Office of the Basic Education Commission, Ministry of Education to ask for more information about the external reading required to be included in the core curriculum for Thai courses. I asked about the criteria for selecting books and also requested for the list of suggested books for teachers to choose for the students to read.

¹⁷ The Center is a non-profit academic institution that was established to fostering academic progress through the extension of anthropological knowledge, through the propagation of new research and findings, through the encouragement and support of development in research studies, and in the accumulation of an extensive collection of anthropology materials with a focus on Thailand and Southeast Asia.

After collecting data from the resources above, I finally included 15 young adult book titles that were published between 1976 and 2006 in my study. The book selection is based on whether or not they meet the book selection criteria, that is, 1) whether they were written in a genre of realistic fiction, 2) whether they were written for young adults aged 12¹⁸ up 3) whether the story has a specific ethnoregional or ethnic group as a primary focus and a young ethnoregional or ethnic character as a main character, and 4) whether the story takes place in Thailand from the late 20th century until today.

I purposefully selected a genre of realistic fiction in this study because it depicts the actual circumstances that could have occurred to anyone in a believable setting and fictional characters who face problems and opportunities that are within the range of what is possible in real life. As stated by Botelho and Rudman (2009), this particular genre allows the young readers to see themselves and their issues and problems represented in the books. They also have an opportunity to see others and share their feelings and experiences with them in order to show empathy and humanity. However, all genres, including realistic fiction, are socially constructed and shape the readers' expectations and responses for the text (Botelho & Rudman, 2009). The genre of realistic fiction can limit the meaning readers make from those texts because they might assume that everything written in them is true. Based on the limitations of this literary genre, the realistic portrayal of any cultural group alone is not sufficient to understand children's literature as historical and cultural products. Thus, it is imperative to critically analyze the representation of power relations in children's literature to better understand how the dominant ideologies about ethnicity, class, and gender are embedded in Thai society.

¹⁸ Young adult fiction (YA) is a category of fiction written for readers from 12 to 18 years of age.

My goal was to select books that were published since 1976 because it was the year that *Luk Isan*, the first book about the Northeastern people, was published. Listed below are the 15 young adult fiction books included in my study in order of the year that they were first published:

1. *Luk Isan (A Child of the Northeast)*¹⁹ by Khamphun Bunthawi (1976)
2. *Hupkhao Saengtawan (The Valley of Sunlight)* by Phibunsak Lakhonphon (1976)
3. *Phisuea Lae Dokmai (Butterfly and Flowers)* by Nipphan (1978)
4. *Thungya Si-namngoen (The Blue Field)* by Phibunsak Lakhonphon (1978)
5. *Muban Apchan (The Village under the Moonlight)* by Mala Khamchan (1980)
6. *Dek Ban Doi (A Child of Ban Doi)* by Mala Khamchan (1981)
7. *Khanamnoi Klang Thungna (A Little Hut in the Paddy Field)* by Chamlong Fangchonchit (1981)
8. *Pono Thirak (Dear Pondok)* by Narongrit Sakdanarong (1981)
9. *Luk Pa (Children of the Wild)* by Mala Khamchan (1982)
10. *Kham Ai*²⁰ by Yong Yasothorn (1988)
11. *Dek Pono (The Pondok Students)* by Anuson Marasa (1997)
12. *Mai Mae*²¹ by Phanumat Phumthawon (1998)
13. *Bitakka Dao Duang Nan Rawang Nam Kap Fa (Bitakka: That Star between the Sea and the Sky)* by Kaya Klathale (2004)
14. *Kiao Bao Na Chok (The Overseas Vietnamese of Na Chok)* by Phanumat Phumthawon (2004)

¹⁹ The English title of *Luk Isan* is taken from the English version by Susan Fulop Kepner, but the titles of the other books are my own translation.

²⁰ Kham Ai is the name of the main character in the story.

²¹ Mai Mae is the name of the main character in the story.

15. *Phisuea Lae Sairung (The Butterfly and the Rainbow)* by Yip Phanchan
(2006)

It is worth mentioning that among the 15 books in the text collection, *Luk Isan* and *Phisuea Lae Dokmai* are books that I could find on my house's bookshelf since most of my siblings and I were assigned to read them as external reading in our Thai classes. These two titles were still available in bookstores during the time that I was searching for books for my collection. *Hupkhao Saengtawan*, *Kham Ai*, *Bitakka Dao Duang Nan Rawang Nam Kap Fa*, and *Phisuea Lae Sairung* are books that I also could find in the bookstores. As the remaining books in my collection are out of print, they were no longer available in the traditional book stores. Therefore, I found *Dek Ban Doi*, *Khanamnoi Klang Thungna*, *Luk Pa*, and *Mai Mae* on the online bookstores. However, some books were not even available online. Therefore, I had to try very hard to find them on the online used books. These books are *Pono Thirak*, *Dek Pono*, and *Kiao Bao Na Chok*. Phibunsak's two books, *Hupkhao Saengtawan* and *Thungya Si-namngoen* could not be found even on the online used books. Fortunately, I could finally find them at a bookstore in Bangkok oldtown which sells remaindered books.

As critical multicultural analysis examines texts against a sociopolitical lens, the dominant messages about race, ethnicity, class, and gender embedded in the secondary sources need to be considered to understand the discourse that circulates in these sources. According to Rudd (1999), it is imperative to place children's books in the discursive field or – that is to say, placing it alongside literary and cultural criticism, and other secondary sources because discourse circulates everywhere. I then also searched for book reviews, literary criticism, background information about authors, children's book awards and publishers, articles, research, curriculum materials, and any other additional studies that might help me better understand the sociopolitical

context of the text collection in my study. Surprisingly, I could not find even a single book review of any text in my collection. What I found are a few pieces of literary criticism of *Luk Isan*, *Pono Thirak*, and *Phisuea Lae Dokmai*.

Data Analysis of Text Collection

After gathering books that meet the criteria of my study, I initially read the 15 books in my collection for an overall impression to find out what the texts made me think about, and in which way I connect or disconnect myself with the story line. Then, I reread those books to create a table of publishing practices of each of them to help me reference them. The table contains information about authors, the first year of book publication, ethnoregional/ethnic groups portrayed in the books, protagonists' name and gender, and the awards that those books have received.²² I wrote an annotated bibliography to summarize each book.²³

Next, I reread those books to examine how the ethnoregional and ethnic groups in all selected texts are represented against my prior knowledge of them. This reading allows me to focus on the differences among the groups and try to understand the social standing of these groups of people within the Thai context. This reading is thus part of the historical and sociopolitical context of representation practices.

After that, I read books, articles, and all documents that provide information about the historical and sociopolitical context of the ethnoregional or ethnic group which is the main focus of each book. I reread each of the books a few more times to analyze focalization, social processes among the characters as well as characters' language use, and story closure. In the sections that follow, I consider the multiple layers of critical multicultural analysis.

²² See Appendix A.

²³ See Appendix B.

Focalization of the Story

Critical multicultural analysis demands that the focalization or point of view of a story needs to be examined because it addresses the perspective through which a narrative is presented. According to Stephens (1992), point of view is the most powerful aspect of narration because it is what the author uses to control audience's reading strategies. Focalization thus can be determined by considering the ways in which the authors construct reading subject position. Whether the story is told from first or third and single or multiple points of view need to be examined. The questions like "Who sees?" "Who is observed?" need to be asked to examine the narrative perspective. The focalization can shift from the perspective of the narrator to another character and to another resulting in different subjective perception of a certain character at the different parts in the story. Narratives that offer multiple perspectives provide readers with multiple reading subject positions, multiple ways of being in the world (Botelho, 2004).

If a story is told from a character's point of view, that character is said to be a focal or focalizing character. The readers see with that character's eyes and identify with him/her. In some stories the narrator is a character whereas the narrator in other stories seems more like an unidentified voice taking a very distant or critical view of the characters (Mays, 2014). The readers may have total identification (Stephens, 1992) from a single point of view which provides them with a single subject position to view the story. On the contrary, multiple points of view from multiple characters or narrators offers the readers different subject positions to view the story.

Type of narration is also important because it determines what the readers know. A narrator in third-person narration is not a character in the story, but is assumed to be the author. A third-person omniscient narrator knows everything about the

characters, including their thoughts and feelings. This type of narration, as a result, allows the readers to know anything that the author wants them to know, and does not limit their knowledge by the experience of the characters. A third-person limited narrator tells the story through a single character, usually the main character. The readers will remain with this character throughout the entire story, seeing what he or she sees, knowing what he or she knows. This type of narrator does not allow the readers to know what is happening beyond this character's experience. An objective narrator tells a story without describing any character's thoughts or feeling. The readers have to understand the situations by gathering the information through the characters' speech and actions as well as their observation and inference.

In first-person narration, the story is told through a character within the story. The narrator may be a protagonist telling his or her own story or the minor character telling a story about someone else. First-person narration limits the readers' knowledge to the narrator's experiences and awareness. This type of narration may be unreliable due to the narrator's misperceptions, personal prejudices, emotional biases, insanity, and the like, which challenges the readers to learn more about the narrator. According to Stephens (1992), one way the first-person narration constructs the readers' world view is by "situating readers in a subject position effectively identical with that of the narrator, so that readers show the narrator's view of the world or are convicted of error when/ if the narrator is proved to be in the wrong in any sense" (p. 57). Critical multicultural analysis asks the readers to pay close attention to text told from this perspective as it simply allows the readers to identify themselves with the main characters.

Social Processes among the Characters

Social processes among the characters can be considered by examining how each character exercises power along the continuum from domination and collusion to resistance and agency. “Whereas Marxians think of power negatively – as domination, coercion, manipulation, authority, or, in short, repression – Nietzscheans negative think of power as producing positive as well as negative effects.” (Couzens Hoy, 1986, p. 130). These four positions of power continuum thus are formed on the basis that a person can exercise power to do good things for other people or he/she can demonstrate power over other people to oppress them. A person can exercise power in all positions depending on the interaction and situation. People also can help themselves move along the continuum to agency. These four positions of power continuum point out that power can harm or help other people depending on who exercises it and how it is exercised.

Domination is the first position in the continuum. It is usually social power since it is the exercise of power over other people. An individual, groups of individuals, or an institution may exercise power over their own and other individual’s social circumstances. This position’s attributes include “dehumanization, victimization, imposition from external forces, and unequal power based on race, class, and gender” (Botelho & Rudman, 2009, p. 119). Domination occurs due to existing social constructs and systems. Sometimes it is interpersonal and used to manipulate the behavior of particular individuals. It is dehumanizing due to the inequity of participation, decision-making, voice, and access. Domination can be conscious or unconscious. When it is conscious, it is an intentional act for the purpose of gaining power over others. For example, masters have complete control over their slaves. When it is unconscious, it is because a person who takes his/her power assumes it to be an expected norm or

it is an authority that has been approved by a society and accepted as legitimate. For example, governments exercise institutional power by creating and enforcing laws, collection taxes, making education compulsory, to name but a few. Churches exercise institutional power by granting or denying members certain rites and sacraments.

Collusion differs from domination in terms of its characteristics of internalized oppression or domination (Botelho & Rudman, 2009). As it may also be conscious or unconscious, it is quite difficult to determine why a person decides to collude with domination. It is possible that a colluder is conscious of the dominant power, but keeps silent about the wrongdoings or injustice as a way to support the dominant force. A colluder may also remain silent because of fear, or lack of power to make change, or they might take advantage of the collusion. Collusion is unconscious when people may not realize the fact that their silence is the power of collusion.

Resistance is another position of power continuum. It is the quintessential power construct of poststructuralism and opposes itself to imposition and coercive power (Botelho & Rudman, 2009). A person may resist domination by actively questioning, arguing, challenging, protesting, or supporting others in a similar situation. Resistance must be conscious.

The last position of the continuum is agency. It is initiation and power. It ideally resides with all races, ethnicities, classes, and genders (Botelho & Rudman, 2009). Agency is also conscious. The power of agency can be exercised when an individual or groups of people make decisions or perform actions that will benefit a community or society based on social justice. Agency, however, does not provide those who are oppressed with dominant power over their oppressors (Kelly, 2004).

Since critical multicultural analysis asks us to analyze the characters' language use and its role in the social processes among the characters, critical discourse analysis will be used as an analytical tool to examine how "ideology and power are expressed,

produced, and reproduced through discourse” (Young & Fitzgerald, 2006, p. 32). Thus, exploring characters’ language use via critical discourse analysis allows us to better understand why the characters choose to use certain words and statements when talking to or about the others. Drawing on Gee’s discourse analysis approach which maintains that a person uses language as a way of saying, doing, and being, I use the doing and not just saying tool to determine what the speaker is trying to do when he/she is communicating with other people (Gee, 2011).

As race, ethnicity, class, and gender cannot be separated from discourse and power, exploring these issues via critical discourse analysis allows us to see the role that language plays in producing and reproducing social inequalities as they get enacted in microinteractions.

Closure of the Story

How the author closes the story also needs to be considered because there might be assumptions imbedded in the story’s ending. A story’s closure or ending might be fixed or open, and is shaped by readers’ subjectivity since most of them bring their own experiences and expectations to the text. As stated by Stephens (1992), most readers learn to look for some sense of completeness. By this, fixed closures can provide the readers with what they look for which leads them to affirm the conclusion drawn. Open endings, on the other hand, may leave the readers feeling uncomfortable and offer them with the space for considering, questioning, or challenging the significance of the story. Stephen (1994) writes,

texts tend to become closed when readers are encouraged to adopt a stance which is the same as that of either the narrator or the principal focaliser. This happens as an aspect of cultural ideology, when a text expresses values, attitudes, concepts, and the like, which readers either consciously agree with or implicitly recognise as self-evident. Texts may tend to be more open when there is a separation between narrator-perception and focaliser perception. or between the perceptions of multiple focalisers, and when there are no strong textual strategies for resolving that difference. (p. 140)

Stephens (1992) states that subject position and story closure are “ideologically powerful component of texts” (p. 44). If readers align themselves with a single character in the story, they might view the story the same way as that character and might not challenge the storyline or construct an alternative ending. However, if the readers create distance between themselves and the narrator or character in the story, they are more likely to read against the text and substitute different conclusions to challenge ideology.

Historical and Sociopolitical Context

Critical multicultural analysis examines texts against sociopolitical and historical contexts that have constructed these texts. The following questions need to be considered to examine the historical context of the texts:

1. What is the specific historical context of the cultural theme presented in the text (s)?
2. How is the historical development of ideologies and discourses of ethnicity (race), class, and gender translated in the book (s) being studied?
3. In what ways do the discourses of the country that the text represents and is produced in prevail in the text (s)? (Botelho & Rudman, 2009; Rogers, 2015)

To look at the texts sociopolitically, the following questions are considered:

1. What cultural statement (s) is the book (s) responding to?
2. What dominant messages about ethnicity (race), class, and gender are imbedded in the book reviews, research, and literature of the book (s) being studied?
3. What is the specific sociopolitical situation of the cultural theme presented in the text (s)? (Botelho & Rudman, 2009; Rogers, 2015).

The multi-layered lens of critical multicultural analysis discussed above will be focused and refocused through a recursive process of the text analysis in my study.

The last section in this chapter discusses my translation practices as a part of the text analysis in this dissertation.

Translation Practices

I relied on translation, from texts written in Thai to English for my non-Thai readers, to bring out the cultural meaning for my audience. As a native Thai who speaks English as a second language, I was able to translate most of the quotations from the selected books. Then, I present the results of my work using chunks of the data in both Thai and English in the main body of the analysis.

Among the 15 selected books in this study, only *Luk Isan* by Khamphun Bunthawi had been translated into English by an American author, Susan Fulop Kepner, entitled *A Child of the Northeast*. Initially, I intended to use the translation as a source of my quotations, but I decided not to use it due to its somewhat inaccurate and misleading translation. This English version of *Luk Isan* becomes a significant representative of Thai literature for English readers because only a small number of Thai novels have been translated into English. However, Kepner's translation is not faithful to Khamphun's original work since the translator has very little knowledge of the Northeastern or Isan region. Moreover, she inserts material that does not exist in the original version which results in misrepresenting the culture of Isan (Platt, 2013). I agree with this criticism of translation; it was based mainly on the dialogical approach, which considers adaptation as a way to adjust a text to suit the target audience (Nikolajeva, 2011). The adaptation found in Kepner's translation includes additions, deletions, and explanations, which I argue, are acceptable but need more attention to authentic cultural representations.

เรือนหลังนี้อยู่ในหมู่บ้านทางภาคอีสานแห่งหนึ่ง ทุกครัวเรือนจึงมีสภาพเหมือนกันคือ มีขี้วัวอยู่
ใกล้ตัวเรือน และคอกวัวคอกควายอยู่ใต้ถุนเรือน รอบๆ หมู่บ้านก็เป็นทุ่งนาและหนองน้ำ ซึ่งจะแห้ง

ขอค่อยๆ เลยหนองน้ำไปอีกหน่อยก็จะเป็นป่าโปร่ง ที่ชาวบ้านเรียกว่า โคกอีแหลว วันไหนแดดร้อนจัดจะไม่มีเด็กๆ วิ่งในถนนเพราะพื้นดินส่วนมากเป็นทราย แต่การไปมาที่ไหนๆ ก็ต้องเดินด้วยตีนเปล่าไม่ว่าดินทรายจะร้อนสักเพียงใด ผู้ที่มีม้าขี่ในบ้านนี้ก็มีเพียงสามคน ถ้าจะไปทอดแหปลาในที่ไกลๆ ก็จะใช้เกวียนเทียมวัวไปกันหลายๆ เล่ม กว่าจะกลับมา ก็กินเวลาเป็นยี่สิบวันไปแล้ว (Khamphun, 2013, p. 12)

This family lived in a village in the northeastern corner of Thailand, which is called “Isan.” *Every house in the village was like every other, built on stilts with a ladder from the porch to the yard below.* There was a pen for water buffalos beneath the house, and a rice silo in on corner of the yard. Beyond the village were rice fields, and a lagoon which was usually dry. Beyond the dry lagoon was a knoll the villagers called Kok Ee-Laew, *where they hunted whatever small animals they could find.*

On days when the sun was very hot, no child played in the lanes between the village houses, for the earth was mostly sand. When people had to leave their houses in the heat of the day, they scampered quickly on bare feet, *for no one had shoes.* (Kamphoon, 2005, p. 18)

The italics in the English translation are the information that Kepner added to explain to the readers about Isan’s people’s house style, what the villagers do at the place called Kok Ee-Laew, and the reasons why most villagers walk bare foot outside. The latest additional information is what I think is not needed because the readers are supposed to realize about the villagers’ difficult condition by themselves after continuing to read the book. On the other hand, the italics in the original Thai version is the information that the translator omitted to translate despite the fact that it portrays the villagers’ hardship. The author states that only three people in the village own horses to travel in long distance while most villagers, if they want to go fishing in the area far away, had to travel by a caravan of oxcarts which took them around 20 days to go back and forth.

The paragraph below is the additional information that the translator added to explain to the readers about the way of eating of Isan people:

The people ate rice every day, at every meal. With the rice, they ate fish that had been pounded with salt, so that it would keep for a long time. There were many kinds of salted fish: pla ra and pla som, pla daek and jaew were the

names of some of their favorites. When the people in the village had used up all of their fish, some of them would go in a caravan of oxcarts to a place where the rain still fell, and fish still swam in the ponds and streams. A fishing caravan was a great event, for it meant a journey of twenty days, and exciting things always happened (Kamphoon, 2005, p. 18)

Actually, the readers can learn more about Isan people's way of eating when they read the book further since it is definitely the author's purpose to tell about Isan people's way of life. Therefore, I do not think that this additional information is needed here. Moreover, I argue that saying that the Isan people eat rice every day does not provide the readers with authentic cultural representation of people of this region because the Northern and Northeastern Thais traditionally eat glutinous rice or *khao niao* as their staple food while Central Thais, Southern Thais, and people in Southern Isan, which borders Cambodia, favor non-sticky rice or *khao chao*.

Another book that has an English translation is Nippan's *Phisuea Lae Dokmai*, translated by a Thai scholar, Sripen Srestasathiern. I use Sripen's English translation as a source of my quotation because I have found that she translated Nippan's story based on the equivalence approach which emphasizes the faithfulness to the original text (Nikolajeva, 2011).

For the rest of selected books, which have no English translation, I choose to translate the quotations from those books based on the equivalence approach because it allowed me to be faithful to the original text. Since my work aims to see how the power relations of race, ethnicity, class, and gender are enacted in the texts through characters' language use, this approach is critical.

Since all of the texts analyzed in my study were written in standard Thai which is the official language of Thailand with multiple varieties of dialects embedded in some texts, one of the main issues found in my translation is that the ethnoregional and ethnic linguistic varieties cannot be easily represented in English. Since each ethnic group has more than a single name (e.g. the name that it calls itself and the name that

it is called by outsiders), another issue I have to encounter is how to represent these autonyms and exonyms in English.

In the autobiographical novel, *Luk Isan*, the author tells his childhood experiences as an Isan child. The use of Lao is embedded throughout the story, but it cannot be seen in the English translation. In the conversation between the main character, Khun, and his father, the latter uses the exonym *Kaeo* to refer to the Vietnamese in their village in the original Thai text. Though the Isan people are the non-dominant group in Thai society and are dominated by the Central Thais, they are the dominant group in the Northeast where ethnic Vietnamese become the marginalized group instead. So, some Isan people then derogatorily refer to the Vietnamese as *Kaeo*. Khun's father is one of those who has a negative attitude towards the Vietnamese, and he does not want his son to get involved with them. Though this exonym might not make much sense to the English-speaking readers, I use the term *Kaeo* to refer to the Vietnamese in my translation in order to allow the audience to feel the sense of ethnic discrimination.

In the books that depict the Karen, the largest hill-tribe group in Northern Thailand, the Northerners refer to them as *Yang*, a name which suggests that they are dirty savages while the Karen people actually call themselves Pga-gan-Yaw. I keep the term *Yang* in my translation because it is an exonym that also has a sense of discrimination.

I maintain the autonym and exonym used in the original texts in the English translation since it is obvious that English, as the dominant language, cannot completely represent the power relations of ethnicity as presented in standard Thai. These translation practices provide me with an opportunity to research multilingually which offers the possibility to make the power relations of ethnicity as they work with class, gender, and language visible.

In the following chapters, I analyze books about ethnoregional and ethnic groups in three regions of Thailand. Chapter 4 examines the ethnoregional and ethnic

groups portrayed in books about Northern Thailand while Chapter 5 and 6 investigate these groups of people depicted in Northeastern and Southern Thailand respectively. I purposefully divided the text analysis into three chapters because a split of chapters helps facilitate the comparison of the three regions and the division helps amplify the complexity of each region of the country.

CHAPTER 4
ANALYSIS OF TEXT COLLECTION I:
BOOKS ABOUT ETHNOREGIONAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS
IN NORTHERN THAILAND

Utilizing Foucault's theory of power and discourse analysis as a theoretical framework and critical multicultural analysis as well as critical discourse analysis as analytical tools, I begin the analysis in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 by providing the historical and sociopolitical context of each ethnoregional and ethnic group. Then, I write about the publishing practices of each text. Next, I explore the representation of ethnoregional and ethnic groups in the books. Finally, I analyze the social processes among the characters to examine how power is exercised as well as present a critical examination of ethnicity, class, and gender in the texts. I also consider focalization, story closure, and language use in each book.

As the Thai ethnicity is subsumed by region, I cluster the text collection in my analysis based on the depiction of ethnoregional groups in each region. The ethnic groups are classified according to the region in which they live. Based on these criteria, this chapter discusses my analysis of books that portray the ethnoregional and ethnic groups in Northern Thailand. I begin the analysis with books about the Northern Thais or Tai Yuan or self-designation Khon Mueang. As there is more than one name used to call this group of people, I call them based on what they are referred to by the author of the book. The next clusters are books that depict the Karen, Hmong, and Tai Yai people, respectively. I analyze books that depict the ethnocregional and ethnic groups in Northeastern and Southern Thailand in Chapter 5 and 6 with the same structure as in this chapter.

The sections that follow are the analysis of books that portray the ethnoregional and ethnic groups in Northern Thailand. There are three books about the Northern Thais, or Tai Yuan, or Khon Mueang: two books about the Karen people: and one book about the Hmong and another about Tai Yai communities.

Northern Thailand



Figure 2. Northern Region of Thailand (Wikipedia, 2019)

Northern Thailand, bordering Laos and Myanmar, is a mountainous region. It consists of 17 provinces. Nine provinces of the upper Northern region are Chiang Rai, Phayao, Chiang Mai, Nan, Phrae, Lampang, Lamphun, Uttaradit, and Mae Hong Son while Kamphaeng Phet, Nakhon Sawan, Phetchabun, Phichit, Phisanulok, Sukhothai, Uthai Thani, and Tak are provinces in the lower Northern region. The area of the upper Northern region is historically related to the Lanna Kingdom and its culture whereas those who live in the lower Northern region are closer to the Central Thais. Northern Thailand is a home to the Northern Thais and several ethnic groups including those highlanders. For the scope of this dissertation, I discuss the historical and sociopolitical context of these groups of people who are portrayed in the text collection of this study.

Historical and Sociopolitical Context of Ethnoregional and Ethnic Groups in Northern Thailand

Northern Thais

The Northern Thai people or Tai Yuan are the majority population of this region. They refer to themselves as Khon Mueang. Their language is widely known as Kham Mueang or Lanna or Northern Thai. Khon Mueang, which means “people of the (cultivated) land,” or “people of our community,” is the term that the Tai Yuan people have used to call themselves since the early Bangkok period. Lanna was the independent kingdom between 1292 and 1585. After that it was ruled over by Burma and Siam respectively. Initially, the Tai Yuan used the term Khon Mueang to label themselves as the local people of the Lanna Kingdom. Later, the term was used more seriously to identify themselves, as local people, from the government officials who were sent from Bangkok. Moreover, the use of the term was their reaction to the Siamese government who always referred to them and other ethnic groups as Lao (Thanet, 2009).

Mountain People

The mountain people have migrated from China, Tibet, Vietnam, Myanmar, and Laos into the upland areas of Northern Thailand over the past 500 years or so (Kislenko, 2004). Nowadays, they mostly live in the high mountains of the north and northwest. According to the Department of Social Development and Welfare, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (2011), there are 10 ethnic groups of mountain people in order of demographic data which include Karen, Hmong, Lahu, Akha, Mian, Tin, Lisu, Sua, Kamu, and Mlabri. These names, however, are the names that each group of mountain people calls themselves which is mostly different from what other people call them. (As cited in Department of Rights and Liberties Promotion, Ministry of Justice, 2011).

Most mountain people do not speak standard Thai, but have distinct tribal languages. All of them have different social and political organization, unique customs, and their own religious beliefs. Most of them are animists, but some group members have over time converted to Christianity while some have adopted Buddhist practices. The mountain people traditionally survive on slash-and-burn farming. Some groups, like the Hmong and Lahu, have had a long-lasting practice in opium cultivation (Kislenko, 2004). As a result, most mountain people are stereotypically portrayed as forest destroyers and opium cultivators. Also, they are usually considered poor and primitive. Currently, a large number of mountain people are still treated as outsiders since they are refused citizenship by the Thai government.

Though many mountain people communities remain isolated from the rest of the country, and maintain their unique cultures, some search for other means to earn a living by selling products like handicrafts and textiles on the streets of major cities like Chiang Mai or even Bangkok. The way they wear their colorful traditional costumes are regular sights. Moreover, many young people now want to leave their villages for life in big cities (Kislenko, 2004).

Karen People

The Karen, most of whom live in Myanmar, have migrated to Thailand over the past 200 years because of political conflicts with the Burmese government. They have settled mostly on the Thailand–Myanmar border from Mae Hong Son Province in the north down to Ratchaburi and Petchaburi Provinces west of Bangkok. The Karen is the largest group of mountain people in Thailand which makes up half of the total mountain people population of the country. Actually, they are divided into four major subgroups: the Skaw Karen or White Karen who call themselves Pga-gan-Yaw, the Pwo Karen or Plong, the Pa-O or Taungthu or Black Karen, and the Bwe or Kayah

or Red Karen (Kislenco, 2004; Tribal Research Institute, 1989). Most Karen people are widely known as *Kariang* to Thai people no matter which specific group they belong to. They are also referred to as *Yang* by the Northerners and other ethnic groups.

Hmong People

The Hmong are one of the most widespread ethnic minority groups. They are scattered throughout south China, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, and a few in Myanmar. Hmong in Thailand migrated from China through Lao and Myanmar to set up villages on the hills around Northern Thailand. They are the second largest group after the Karen. There are three subgroups of Hmong to be found in Thailand: Blue Hmong or Hmong Njua, White Hmong or Hmong Daw, and Hmong Gua M'ba. Hmong people are more heavily engaged in opium production than any other mountain people in Thailand (Tribal Research Institute, 1989). They call themselves Hmong while most Thai people almost always refer to them as *Meo* which is regarded as a derogatory term for them.

Tai Yai People

Tai Yai is a term in standard Thai used to refer to a Tai ethnic group in Northern Thailand while they call themselves Tai. They live primarily in the area that is today known as Shan state of Myanmar where they have been known as Shan. When Myanmar, or Burma in the past, was under British rule, Shan had become a state and the British also calls people of this state Shan. Due to their loss in wars with China, Burma, and the British colonization, the Shan's land had to be divided and the Shan people had to migrate to the neighboring countries including Burma, China, India, Laos, and Thailand. In the Bangkok period, this group of people was referred to with a derogatory term as *Ngiao*. Today the majority of Tai Yai people are found in Mae

Hong Son Province which is regarded as their center. Also, they are scattered in Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai Provinces (Institute of Tai Yai Studies, 2019).

Production Practices of Text Collection about Northern Thais

Books included in this cluster are *Thungya Si-namngoen* and *Dek Ban Doi*. I summarize the significant information about these two books in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Text Collection about Northern Thais

Title	First Publication	Ethnoregional/ Ethnic Group	Main Character's Name/Gender	Point of View
<i>Thungya Si-namngoen</i> (<i>The Blue Field</i>)	1978	Tai Yuan	Mawi/Male	Third-person limited
<i>Dek Ban Doi</i> (<i>A Child of Ban Doi</i>)	1981	Khon Mueang	Mongkhon/Male	Third-person limited

Thungya Si-namngoen was first published in *Satri San* magazine before being compiled and published in 1978. The book won the honorary mention award for pre-adolescent fiction from the National Books Development Commission in 1978. The latest edition was published in 2001. The author says in the preface of this edition that though this work is classified as a young adult book, he aims to write it for the adult readers, especially teachers, educators, and a minister of education who is in charge of education reform (Phibunsak, 2001).

The author, Phibunsak Lakhonphon, was born in Mae Chai District in Chiang Rai Province (it is currently part of Phayao Province). He has a lot of experiences in life due to different types of jobs including teacher, freelance columnist, editor, copy writer, and writer.

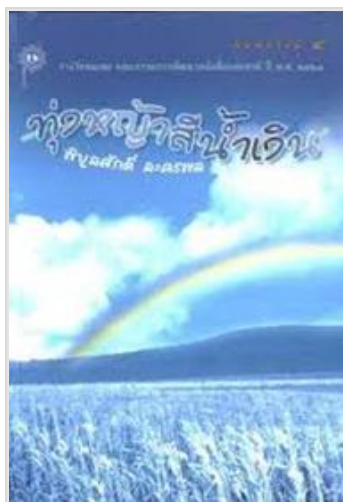


Figure 3. *Thungya Si-namngoen* by Phibunsak Lakhonphon

Written in 1976, *Dek Ban Doi* is Mala Khamchan's first novel which has his hometown, Ban Doi, in Northern Thailand as a setting of the story. As claimed by the author, this book was inspired by his childhood experience, and it is a record of Ban Doi's geographical features and social life between 1957 and 1969. It was first published in a magazine, *Fa Mueang Thai*, before being compiled and published in 1981. The latest edition was published in 2014.

Mala Khamchan was born Charoen Malaroj in 1952 in Phan District of Chiang Rai Province. He has won several major book awards, including International Board of Book for Young People (IBBY) in 1990 and Thailand's foremost literary prize, the Southeast Asian Writers Award (S. E. A. Write Award), in 1991. Also, he was selected as the National Artist in literature in 2013.



Figure 4. *Dek Ban Doi* by Mala Khamchan

Representation of Northern Thais in Text Collection

In *Thungya Si-namngoen*, Tai Yuan community is represented by young Mawi and his father who live in a village situated a long way from the town. Mawi's mother passed away when he was very young. He always enjoys wildlife and hunting. One day a principal from a school of the sub-district council comes to the villages where Mawi and his Karen friends live to encourage their parents to send them to school. Though Mawi disagrees with his father and does not understand why he has to go to school despite the fact that he is able to learn so many things from the surrounding nature, he and his four Karen friends have to go after all unwillingly.

Mawi and his Karen friends are portrayed as those who are provided with an opportunity to have access to education due to the Thai government's policy to expand the educational opportunity to people in the remote area. Mawi's father agrees to send him to school because he believes that schooling allows his son to have a better life. However, Mawi and his Karen friends are unhappy with an opportunity provided to them because going to the same school as those lowland children is not a good experience for them. Their teachers and schoolmates consider them as forest boys. Moreover, Mawi's Karen friends are discriminated against due to the stereotyping of their

personal hygiene. In addition, Mawi and his Karen friends have to adjust themselves to learn new things which are completely different from what they are accustomed to. For example, they have to stand in a row with other students to pay homage to the Thai national flag every morning; they are required to have their hair cut, they are taught to take good care of their personal hygiene; they are told to wear the school uniforms; they have to communicate to their teachers and peers in standard Thai. Mawi feels like he has no freedom in the classroom at all and wants to run away home. It is his father who challenges him to overcome himself. Then, Mawi decides to go back to school until he finishes grade four.

Later, the principal informs him that he has been selected to further his studies in a school in town. This seems to be very good news for anyone in general, but for Mawi, it is bad news. In spite of his unwillingness to pursue his studies, he decides to go to school in town after his father reminded him that his teacher means well to him and he needs to think it over. Mawi gets frustrated at a new school because it requires the students to follow rules even more seriously than his local school. For example, most students are required to speak standard Thai only: they have to learn English; and they are not allowed to go out of the school area. Mawi and some of his Karen peers feel unhappy with the subjects offered at school since they are too difficult and useless for their daily lives. Finally, Mawi decides to flee from school and returns to the wildlife which he gets used to. This time his father accepts his decision. Mawi and his Karen friends are thus depicted as those who question the educational system of the country.

Khon Mueang in *Dek Ban Doi* are those who live in Ban Doi, a village in the remote area of Chiang Rai Province. Though they do not starve, they have low-economic status. Mongkhon, an eight-year-old boy, lives with his parents in this village. He is the

youngest child of his parents' three children. So, Mongkhon is very close to his grandmother, and always enjoys listening to her tales which are told to him in the form of traditional northern poetry. Once he applied for a scholarship to further his studies in grade five, but he was unable to get it because it was given to a son of a government official. As a result, his father has to work harder to earn more money to support him and his brothers to go to school. His father farms and encounters difficulty when a drought happens. His mother prepares banana leaves to be sold for making traditional northern cigarettes. Also, both of them stay late every night to make wicker baskets to earn more money after being free from their routine work. Mongkhon is lucky that he is not supposed to be responsible for anything except going to school.

Both his father and grandmother represent the old generation of the Northern Thais. His grandmother even identifies herself as Khon Mueang, and tells her grandson that their language is Lanna or Mueang, not Thai. Mongkhon questions her why he does not learn Lanna at school instead of standard Thai. Mongkhon thus represents the new generation of the Northern Thais who learn to be Khon Mueang at home and Thai at school.

The Northerners are depicted as those who strongly believe in animism. The villagers, including Mongkhon's parents and grandmother, often tell ghost stories to children. Once Mongkhon was scared by what he believed was a ghost, and got severely sick. Though a folk doctor gave him some injections, he had not recovered. Then, his father invited a shaman to cure him, and he got better in a few days.

Additionally, the Northerners are rendered as those who attach to cultural practices. When Mongkhon's grandmother passed away, his father has to follow the village cultural practices as the funeral host by offering good food and drink, including liquor, to guests as much as they want. His father has to spend a lot of money in spite

of his financial problems. What has happened to Mongkhon's father reveals that the Northerners are attached to old traditional practices even if they trouble themselves.

One day a new road was made past the village. Due to the drought that affects rice farming, the construction of a new road brings a big change to the villagers' and Mongkhon's family' lives. Mongkhon's father can earn more money by renting the house to laborers; and the gambling house is open 24 hours a day.

Exercise of Power among Characters in Text Collection about Northern Thais

Thungya Si-namngoen is told from the third-person limited point of view, mostly through Mawi, the main character of the story. The readers will remain with him throughout the entire story, seeing what he sees and knowing what he knows. However, some parts of the story are also told from Mawi's teachers' and the principal's perspectives as a way to criticize the educational system as well as Thai bureaucracy. As a consequence, the readers are offered multiple subject positions to view the story.

The dominant power is exercised by the Thai government by means of educational policy which requires all children to go to school. The principal from a school of the subdistrict council comes to the villages to ask the children's parents to send them to school. The children's parents collude with this dominant power because they think that it is a good opportunity for their children to have a better life if they go to school. Also, Mawi and his Karen friends collude with their parents,' or in particular, their fathers' dominant power, because they do what their fathers want them to do though they are not happy with it. However, Mawi colludes to resist later.

Mawi and his Karen friends have to experience discrimination against them since they leave their villages for school. On the way to go there, they meet with the

villagers who curiously want to see “forest people” as they refer to them among their group. The children on the road even mock them by shouting “Savage *Yang*.” What has happened here reveals that the lowland villagers consider Mawi and his Karen friends as others and inferiors. Actually, Mawi is not a member of the Karen community, but the village people think that he is because he does not look much different from the Karen people in terms of physical characteristics.

At school the principal also refers to the Karen students as *Yang*, “ปีนี้เด็ก ‘ยาง’ มาเข้ามากเป็นพิเศษ...” [“There are more *Yang* students coming to study with us more than before...”] (Phibunsak, 2001, p. 36). He says this statement in front of all students and teachers on the first school day. When he realizes that the Karen students are excited with a car they see on the road, he tells them to *wai*²⁴ or pay respect to that car:

“ไม่เคยเห็นหรือไง นั่นไงละ มาที่ถนนนั่นละ ไหว้เสียสิ...” ครูใหญ่หันมาทางพะจะมูและเพื่อน เด็กทั้งสามหน้าตาเล็กลัก “ไหว้ซะ” ครูใหญ่บอก เด็กทั้งสามจึงทำตามแต่โดยดีอย่างไม่เข้าใจอะไร เด็กๆ หัวเราะกันเกรียว รวมทั้งครูคนอื่นๆ ด้วย

“You guys’ve never seen it? Come on! It’s coming to the road. Pay respect to it...” The principal turned to Phacha Mu and friends. The three boys looked bewildered. “Pay respect!” The principal repeated. The three boys then did as they were told to do without understanding the issue. Other students and teachers laughed at them loudly. (Phibunsak, 2001, p. 36)

Schooling, instead of being a place where everyone is treated equally and respectfully, dehumanizes those ethnic youths who have less opportunity to have access to modernization. The verbal bullying also occurs when some lowland students mock their Karen classmates as Savage *Yang*. This time Mawi gets mad for his Karen friends. Then, the two sides argue:

“ยางมันไม่ดียังไง เขาก็เป็นคนเหมือนพวกเงี้ยวแหละและเก่งกว่าด้วย เขากินข้าวเหมือนกัน” มาวีได้เถียงเสียงดัง มันช้ำไม่ล้างกัน “เงี้ยวหรือวะ ใช้ไม้ทั้งนั้น”

²⁴ It is a Thai way of greeting, expressing gratitude, apologizing, showing respect, and bidding farewell. It consists of a slight bow, with the palms pressed together in a prayer-like fashion.

“ไม่ใช่โวย นี่แหละเขาว่า ให้อ้วกในตง มันไม่รู้จักส้วมซึม ช้ำล้างกันโวย หนอยไม่รู้แล้วเสือกพูด...”
เจ้าเด็กคนนั้นชี้หน้าร้องเียวๆ

“What’s the matter for being a *Yang*? They are human being like you guys and even better. They also eat rice.” Mawi argued loudly.

“They never clean up after pooping.”

“Did you guys do clean up? You guys use stick, too.”

“Of course not. You forest boys have no idea about a toilet. I did clean up. Shut up if you don’t really know.” That boy pointed in Mawi’s face while yelling. (Phibunsak, 2001, p. 40)

Mawi can no longer be tolerant and strikes that student. His reaction is the way he exercises the power of resistance to his classmate’s dominant power. He chooses not to remain silent, but challenges this dominance by using violence. As a result, he had been whipped by the principal as a punishment. Mawi does not get angry for being punished, but he questions why he has been treated like an animal. He makes a decision to flee from school and when his father tries to persuade him to go back he argues:

“ข้าไม่ชอบโรงเรียน มีแต่คนขลาดและโง่ๆ”

“เจ้ารู้ได้ไง” พ่อชักมีโมโห

“ก็คนที่ต้องยืนนิ่งๆ คอยฟังครูด่านะสิคนโง่”

“I don’t like school. It’s full of cowards and fools.”

“How do you know?” his father asked angrily.

“A person who just stands still to listen to teachers’ bad words is a fool.”
(Phibunsak, 2001, p. 47)

The way that the principal treats Mawi’s Karen friends as a fool, the punishment given to Mawi, and his comments on schooling suggests teachers’ dominant power over students in Thai schooling.

Mawi also demonstrates the power of resistance by questioning the new principal when he persuades him to further his study in a higher level due to his good academic performance. He does not understand why he needs to study more when he does not want to be anything that most people want to. He just wants to go home. However, Mawi has to go back to school again after his father asked him to reconsider the principal’s good intention. At this school, Mawi and his new Karen friends are not

allowed to speak their own languages in the classrooms. They are forced to speak only in standard Thai, and are required to learn English. One of his Karen friends asks why he needs to study English when he lives on the mountain and never has a chance to use it. Another one says he is in doubt why he needs to learn complex math and geometry while knowing to count numbers 1 to 100 and basic rules of math like addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division are just enough for him. His Karen friends' views reflect the dominant power of the Thai government's educational policy which forces the students to learn what the authority thinks they should learn by not considering whether what they have learned will be useful and practical for their lives. Finally, Mawi demonstrates the power of resistance by dropping out school and going back to the place where he belongs to.

This book is a male-dominated one since the main character and most supporting characters are males. A few female characters are those teachers who teach Mawi and his Karen friends at school. One of those is Naengnoi. She exercises the power of resistance by trying to stop discrimination against the Karen students. Once she asks all students, including Turu, about what they want to be when growing up:

“เธอล่ะอยากเป็นอะไรครู”

ครูหน้าแดง ก้มหน้าอายๆ ยืนนาน กว่าที่จะโผล่ออกมาว่า “ผมช่วยพ่อทำไร่ครับ...”

“เธอ...” ครูลากเสียงยาว “แกง เธอรักพ่อแม่...ดิฉันคนเราควรรักพ่อแม่ และรักบ้านเกิด...” ครูหันไป

พูดกับนักเรียน ทุกคนมีเสียงฮือฮา ไม่พอใจคำตอบของครู และเสียงหัวเราะคิกคัก “พวกขายนี่นา...”

เด็กบางคนพูดเสียงดัง ทำเอาครูต้องหันไปเอ็ด

“ครูบอกก็ครั้งที่เห็นแล้ว ว่าไม่ให้ดูถูกกันวันดี...” ครูเข้าไปใกล้ๆ เด็กคนนั้น ซึ่งมักล้อพวกเด็ก

กะเหรี่ยงเสมอๆ เธอเป็นลูกของนายโจละ คนมั่งคั่งคนหนึ่งของตำบล

“What do you want to be, Turu?”

Turu's face turned red. He bent down his head shyly for a while before speaking out, “I want to help my dad do farming...”

“Oh...I see,” the teacher drawled. “Great! You love your parents...We should be grateful to our parents and homeland...” She turned to speak to her students. Then the classroom was buzzing. Most students were dissatisfied with Turu's answer, and giggling. “The *Yang* guys...” One student spoke out loud until the teacher had to turn to blame her.

“Wandee, I’ve told you guys several times that do not insult others...” The teacher came close to that student who almost always mocks those Karen children. She is a daughter of a wealthy man in the sub-district. (Phibunsak, 2001, p. 61)

This female teacher, though, does not have a key role in the story, she is the only female character who has the role and resists the power of domination.

The story closes after Mawi decides to go home to spend his life in the way he wants with his father. In the last scene his father asks him to read some documents written in standard Thai, and he is able to read them correctly and fluently. His father is happy with Mawi’s ability to read and tells him that he accepts his decision to drop out of school since he believes that his son is mature enough to make his own decision. The story then opens to leave the readers with the curiosity to know more about Mawi’s life. What will happen to him from now on? Does he make a right decision to drop out of school and spend his life as he chooses?

Dek Ban Doi is told from a third-person limited point of view through the main character, Mongkhon, who is closely followed throughout the story. This single point of view thus provides the readers with a single subject position to view the story.

The characters in this book are Khon Mueang who have their own language and script. Due to the Central Thai domination, however, they are required to learn to speak and write standard Thai at school. For the old generation who are not formally educated, they still have strong sense of identity in being Khon Mueang, whereas the new generation like Mongkhon remains skeptical about his identity as can be seen in his conversation with his grandmother while listening to her tales told in the form of traditional northern poetry:

“อย่าอ่านได้หรือตัวหนังสือพม่า”
“ใครบอก นั่นละตัวเมือง ภาษาของเราคนเมือง”
“ที่ผมเรียนครูบอกตัวไทย ภาษาของเราคนไทย”
“ไม่ใช่ เราไม่ใช่คนไทย เราเป็นคนเมือง”

“ถ้าเราเป็นคนเมือง ทำไมครูไม่ให้เรียนตัวเมืองล่ะ”

“กูจะไปรู้เรื่อง”

“Grandma, can you read Burmese script?”

“Who says that? It’s Mueang script. It’s our Mueang language.”

“At school my teacher says we learn Thai script. It’s our Thai language.”

“No. We aren’t Thai. We’re Khon Mueang.”

“If that’s the case, why don’t my teachers let me learn Mueang script?”

“How do I know?” (Mala, 2014, p. 55)

The old generation like his grandmother resists the Central Thai power of domination by self-identifying as Khon Mueang and preserving their cultural heritage in terms of language and literature. The new generation like Mongkhon is skeptical about his identity because the Northern cultural heritage has been transmitted to him at home, by his grandmother in particular, but he has been taught to be Thai at school. By this, he unconsciously colludes with the Thai government’s dominant power through the educational system like any other ethnoregional and ethnic children. However, he also resists this power by questioning himself why his teachers do not teach the traditional northern poetry in class despite the fact that he can better understand it than those written in standard Thai. Mongkhon’s question reflects that the Thai government exercises dominant power in schools by requiring all students to learn standard Thai and Thai literature. To do this, the educational system in Thailand ignores the ethnoregional and ethnic children’s linguistic repertoires.

Mongkhon’s failure to pass the examination to get the scholarship for his studies also reveals the Thai government’s dominant power. As Mongkhon has to compete with the local government official’s son, it is believed that his chance to pass the examination could be less because the government official is supposed to use his authority to help his son pass. Despite the fact that the government officials are representatives of the Thai government who have been sent to serve people across the country, many of them behave as if they are the local people’s masters. As a result,

the local people in general usually consider these officials as their masters while accepting their own status as just commoners. Mongkhon's mother encourages him not to feel sad:

“เราแพ้เพราะเขามันลูกเจ้าลูกนาย เรามันไพร่”

“แม่...คนอย่างเราต้องแพ้เจ้าแพ้นายตลอดไปหรือ”

แม่ไม่ตอบคำถาม

“You failed because he's the master's kid, but you're just a son of commoners.”

“Mom, do the commoners like us always have to lose to those authorities?”

His mother did not answer his question. (Mala, 2014, p. 84)

His mother's silence suggests that she does not have the answer for her son. She has to collude with the power of domination because she lacks power to do or change anything. The only thing she can do is to encourage her son to accept the truth of life. For her, it seems like no matter what happens, life must go on.

The villagers' difficulty due to drought also reveals the Thai government's dominant power. The head of the village and other villagers, including Mongkhon's father, go to report and ask for help at the district office. However, the sheriff is unable to do anything but sends the report to the governor, and the governor has to send it to the central government in Bangkok. What has happened reveals that the local government is not what the villagers can rely on, and Bangkok is the center of everything. Therefore, the villagers have to wait for help just from the central government which takes too much time to solve their problem on time. Finally, they have to rely on themselves.

In addition, the Thai government exercises the power of domination by changing the villagers' way of life. The construction of a new road past the village, on the one hand, brings a better life to them in terms of materialism; on the other hand, it completely changes the villagers' way of life when the mountains and large area of forests have

been destroyed during road construction; many farming lands have been sold to business people, a lot of strangers including foreigners come to the village. Mongkhon, in his coming of age, disagrees with this change and wants to bring back the old environment of his village. Unfortunately, he is unable to stop the change while most of the villagers are excited with it and happy with the more money they earn from this change. The only thing Mongkhon can do is to resist it by questioning the head of the village:

“พ่อหลวงทำไมไม่คัดค้านบ้าง”

“มันยาก...มันยากลูกหลานเอ๋ย”

“เห็นมัยมันกำลังจะตาย ทุกสิ่งทุกอย่างกำลังจะตาย”

“จะให้พ่อหลวงพูดได้อย่างไร ดอย ชีดิน ป่าไม้ ห้วยน้ำ ลำธาร มันไม่ใช่ของเรา มันเป็นของเจ้าแผ่นดิน ท่าน หลวงท่านตกลงกันอยู่แล้ว คนอย่างเราจะทำอะไรได้”

“ก็ร้องค้านสิ ดอยไม่ใช่ลูกเดียว ทำไมเจาะจงล้มทลายเอาแต่บ้านเรา ทางอื่นก็มีเยอะเยอะ ทำไมไม่ไปเอาที่อื่นบ้าง”

“มันอาจอยู่ไกล อยู่ไกลเกินไป”

“พ่อหลวงคอยดูต่อไปสิ ตาย ความตาย ทุกสิ่งทุกอย่างกำลังจะตาย”

“เขาก็ไม่ได้เอาไปไหน ถมถนนหนทาง ถนนมาถึงเส้นหนึ่งความเจริญมันก็แล่นมาทางหนึ่ง นี่บ้านเราจะมีถนนถึงสองเส้นนะ

“ไม่ใช่ผมไม่เห็นความสำคัญของถนน พ่อหลวงครับ ถ้าจะสร้างความเจริญให้เรา จำเป็นด้วยหรือ จะต้องตัดเส้นชีวิตพวกเรา”

“Why don't you oppose it?

“It's difficult... difficult, boy.”

“Can you see that it is going to die? Everything is going to die.”

“How can I say anything? Mountain, soil, forest, stream, brook, all of them 're not ours. They belong to the King. When the government agrees to make it, what can a commoner like us do?”

“We can oppose it. There is not just a single mountain. Why do they want to destroy just our mountain? There're plenty of them around. Why don't they destroy other mountains?)

“They might be too far, far away.”

“Wait and see, 'death.' Everything is going to die.

“But, the construction of a road brings civilization to our village. We're going to have two roads soon.”

“It doesn't mean that I don't see how important the road is, sir. If they bring civilization to us, why do they have to destroy our way of life.” (Mala, 2014, pp. 211-212)

The conversation between Mongkhon and the head of the village indicates that most commoners collude with the Thai government's dominant power because they take advantage of the collusion, and this advantage makes them have a better life. More importantly, the dominant power is related to the monarchy which continues to command huge respect in Thailand. Mongkhon is representing a few commoners who resist the power of domination by actively questioning.

This story has more male characters than females. The only two female characters are Mongkhon's mother and grandmother. The latter has significant role since she is representing the old generation who preserves their ethnic identity as Khon Mueang, and resists the Central Thai dominant power by rejecting to be self-identified as Thai.

The story ends with the narration of the evening scene of the village where the sound of foreign songs is loudly heard while the memory of the beautiful and peaceful village in the past has been being described. The closure opens to let the readers think about what will happen to the villagers and Mongkhon's family from now on when their way of life is not the same as they used to be in the past, and will never be the same again forever.

Production Practices of Text Collection about Karen People

Books included in this cluster are *Muban Apchan* and *Luk Pa*. I summarize the significant information about these two books in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Text Collection about Karen People

Title	First Publication	Ethnoregional/ Ethnic Group	Main Character's Name/Gender	Point of View
<i>Muban Apchan</i> (<i>The Village under the Moonlight</i>)	1980	Karen	Nu Pho and Mo Nepho/Male	Third-person omniscient
<i>Luk Pa</i> (<i>Children of the Wild</i>)	1982	Karen	Yachi/Male	Third-person omniscient

Muban Apchan is a story of two Karen boys and their community who live in the mountains of the Northern Thailand. It is the second book by Mala Khamchan in my text analysis of this study. Mala wrote this book from his experience as a teacher in a village in Chiang Mai Province where the villagers are from Karen and Hmong communities. However, he taught there for only one year before moving back to town due to his health issues. *Muban Apchan* was first published in 1980. The latest edition was published in 2014. The book won the award for pre-adolescent fiction from the National Books Development Commission in the same year it was first published.



Figure 5. *Muban Apchan* by Mala Khamchan

This is another book by Mala Khamchan. *Luk Pa* is a story about two youth characters who are connected to one another despite their different ethnicity and socioeconomical status. Mala states that this book was inspired by a government official in the Ministry of Education who persuaded him to write a story to promote ethics to young adults in the form of fiction. The book was first published in 1982 and won the award for pre-adolescent fiction from the National Books Development Commission as well as the National Youth Bureau²⁵ in the same year of its first publication. The latest edition was published in 2008.

²⁵ This book award no longer exists after the National Youth Bureau was integrated with the Department of Children and Youth, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security in 2015.

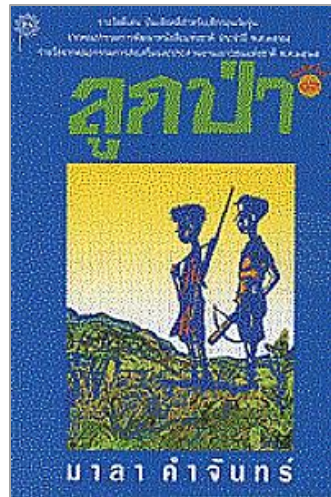


Figure 6. *Luk Pa* by Mala Khamchan

Representation of Karen People in Text Collection

The Karen in *Muban Apchan* are portrayed as those who are marginalized due to their ethnicity. They are treated badly by those whom they refer to as lowland people. For example, they have to undersell their harvests to the traders because it is too difficult for them to go down to sell their products. Moreover, the lowland people call them by an offensive term, *Yang*, while they call themselves Pga-gan-Yaw. Due to their marginalization, the old generation still recalls to the prosperity of the Karen in the past and feels like they are the others in the land they live now. The new generation, though, is aware of being Karen, they feel that they belong to the land they live on now.

The Karen people are also depicted as those who have low socioeconomic status. They earn their lives by growing plants, but the distance of their habitation from the town is the main obstacle to get good prices for their products. In addition, their cultivation relies on rainfall. This means that it is impossible to farm anything in the dry season. The distance also prevents them from being given equal educational opportunities and medical care services. Those who are severely ill and need to see a doctor have to travel a long way to the public health center in town. The nearest one is about a six-hour walk since there is neither car nor cart route. Once in a while there

might be a doctor who comes up to heal the sick people in the village. Those Karen children who want an education have to go to school in town, and certainly very few parents would be able to support their children.

The young Nu Pho and Mo Ngepho represent the new generation of the Karen. The former is four years younger than the latter. They are good friends, but their lives are much different. While most Karen people including Mo Ngepho's family are socioeconomically marginalized, the socioeconomic status of Nu Pho's family is much better than his friend's and others. Nu Pho lives in a big and strong house with his parents. His family owns some water buffalos and never suffers from hunger. Mo Ngepho, on the contrary, lost his father and lives with his mother and five younger sisters and brothers. As a single mom, it is really hard for his mother to take good care of her children. Thus, Mo Ngepho's family often experiences starvation. Nu Pho tries to offer help to his friend whenever he can. Mo Ngepho appreciates his friend's help and once saved his life from a wild boar attack. Later, Mo Ngepho has to be overwhelmed with grief due to the loss of his mother. Finally, the two boys have to separate from one another when Nu Pho's father decided to send him to study with a Buddhist monk in town while Mo Ngepho, after the loss of his mother, has to become a pillar for his five siblings.

In *Luk Pa*, Yachi is a Karen boy and a son of a Karen villager. He is a close friend of Mueangkham, a Northern boy and a son of the headman of the village. The two boys become good friends despite their differences in ethnicity and socioeconomic status which has a big impact on their lives.

Yachi is portrayed as a Karen boy who values education and wants to be educated to help improve the Karen children's quality of life by coming back to teach them. However, his family's low socioeconomic status does not allow him to go further.

Though he is a good student and funded for his studies, the money he receives from the local trade association is still not enough to support his daily expenses. As a result, his father, who also values the education, has to work even harder to support him. On the contrary, Mueangkham does not enjoy going to school at all, but his father is able to support him and wants him to study as much as possible. Finally, both of them go to the same school and stay in the same dormitory. During school year Yachi has to encounter financial issues since his father often sends money to him late. When his father has an accident and can no longer work hard, his opportunity in education ends. Yachi accepts the truth about his life, and understands his family's situation very well. What has happened to Yachi indicates that education is too expensive for the have-nots like the mountain children despite the fact that they have good academic performance. On the contrary, the haves like Mueangkham is able to pursue his studies though he himself does not want to go to school at all. Mueangkham gets bored with classrooms and has low academic performance, but he is able to further his studies at a school in town because his father values education and can financially support him very well. Not only Mueangkham, but also another Karen boy, Sutho, has an opportunity to further his studies because his father is a wealthy trader.

The Karen people in this story are also depicted as those who have to experience discrimination against their ethnicity. At school Yachi is bullied verbally and physically by a classmate. At the same time, the Karen boy like Sutho feels ashamed about his cultural identity. He even changes his name to the standard Thai, and ignores Yachi as well as asks him not to speak the Karen language to him because he feels embarrassed to let other people know that he is a Karen. Also, Sutho accuses Yachi of stealing his watch, but lastly, he feels guilty and accepts his Karen identity. For Yachi, he is tolerant of any unpleasant thing that has happened to him because his father always teaches him to be patient and humble. However, the tolerance and humility that have been

passed to Yachi by his father portray the Karen as those who accept the stereotyping and inferiority of their ethnicity that the dominant group provides to them.

Exercise of Power among Characters in Text Collection about Karen People

Muban Apchan is told from multiple points of view. The readers come to know the thoughts, actions, and feelings of all of the characters in the story from the third-person omniscient narrator which offers the readers multiple subjective positions to view the story.

The lowland people demonstrate their dominant power over the Karen by offensively calling them *Yang*. Moreover, the traders from the town take advantage of them by lowering the prices of their products. Pela Pho, Nu Pho's father, discusses with his wife about selling cabbages to the traders from the lowland:

“ถ้าไม่ขายคนพื้นราบแล้วจะขายให้ใคร” นางผู้เป็นเมียพูด
“มันเอาเปรียบเรามากเกินไป ข้ารู้นะ วิทยุบอกว่ากะหล่ำในเมืองกิโละห่าบาท แต่มันซื้อเราเพียง
สี่สิบสตางค์”
“เราเลือกไม่ได้ พ่อหนูโพ เกิดเป็นคนดอยก็ลำบากอย่างนี้ สู้จำให้ดลเมื่อแล้งก่อนได้ไหม คนพื้นราบ
ซื้อมากกิโละห่าบาท มันบอกว่าหนทางไกล ไปมาลำบาก สู้ไม่ขายให้มัน สู้แบกลงดอยไปขายเอง
กลับได้เพียงหกบาท เราเห็นคนพื้นราบไม่พ้อหรอก”

“If we don't sell them to the lowland traders, who we're gonna sell to?” said his wife.

“They take advantages of us too much. I know well that the radio news says that the cabbage prices're four baht ²⁶ per kilo, but they buy from us just 40 satang.”

“We have no choices. Being born as mountain people, we have to encounter the hardship like this. Can you remember what happened with our mushroom last dry season? The lowland trader offered us five baht a kilo. They claimed that it is a far distance and difficult to go back and forth. You didn't sell the mushroom to them and went down from the hill to sell them by yourself and got just six baht a kilo. You see. We cannot avoid the lowland people anyway.” (Mala, 2014, p. 148)

²⁶ The baht is the official monetary unit of Thailand. It is subdivided into 100 satang.

Even though the Karen people know that they are being taken advantage of, they have no better options due to the distance of their location to the town. As a result, most of the Karen have to sell their crops for low prices and do not earn enough to survive. The Karen, therefore, have to exercise the collusive power to survive.

However, some Karen families have better situations than the others. Nu Pho's family is one of those while his best friend's family, Mo Ngepho, is very poor, and never has enough food to eat. Nu Pho thus has a better opportunity in his life than his friend when his father decides to send him to a school founded for the mountain people in town after realizing that it is imperative for his son to learn standard Thai. Pela Pho exercises the power of collusion by supporting the Thai government's dominant power through the educational system. He strongly believes that the lack of knowledge in the dominant language would confine his son in the forest as well as marginalize and disadvantage him in many ways. He points out that in Nu Pho's generation, those who do not know standard Thai would be in trouble. He speaks to his son:

“ข้อห้ามข้อประกาศอันใดที่ทางอำเภอส่งมาก็เป็นหนังสือไทย จะซื้อควายขายควายก็ทำสัญญา
จะเกิดจะตายก็ต้องแจ้งกำนัน ปาเถอะญอกับโลกภายนอกต้องเกี่ยวข้องกันมากขึ้น พ่อว่านุโพรู้
หนังสือไทยไว้ก็ดี”

“The announcements sent to us from the district office were all written in standard Thai. Contracts are required if anyone wants to sell or buy a water buffalo. A subdistrict headman needs to be notified of births and deaths. We are more likely to connect to the outside world. I think that it'd better for you to learn standard Thai.” (Mala, 2014, p. 148)

Pela Pho's statements suggest the Central Thai power of domination over the Karen via the language that they speak. Though the Karen people confine themselves in their own world, they still cannot resist the Central Thai dominant power by means of language because the resistance might affect their way of lives. Nu Pho exercises collusive power by agreeing with his father. Though he does not want to depart from his homeland, family, and friends, to attend school in town, he does nothing to oppose him.

Those who are positioned as resisters in the story are Kasawa, the old man of the Karen community; Mo Ngepho, the Buddhist monk; and the doctor who comes to treat the Karen patients while the new generation of Karen are positioned as colluders. The old Kasawa is the only one who questions about the extinction of the Karen ethnicity despite the fact that it was a flourishing community in the past. He wants to go back to his land and is concerned that the dominant culture would finally destroy the Karen community and assimilate them into its culture. The new Karen generation, however, is not convinced by the old Kasawa's thoughts and do not quite understand why he wants to go back to the past when Thailand is now their home. One of the young Karen says,

“บ้านเมืองของพ่อเฒ่าอยู่ที่โน่น แต่บ้านเมืองของพวกข้าอยู่ที่นี้ ข้าไม่เข้าใจนัก อยู่ที่นี่ก็สุขสบายแล้ว
ทำไมพ่อเฒ่าต้องคิดกลับไปอีก”

“Your home is there, but our home is here. I don't quite understand why you want to go back there while we're happy living here.” (Mala, 2014, p. 46)

The young Karen people, though, realize their hardship and oppression of being the minority in the dominant culture, practice the power of collusion by ignoring their own roots, and unconsciously supporting the dominant force. Among the new generation, Mo Ngepho is the only one who reacts to the old Kasawa's question. He is angry and resentful about the Karen's situation.

The monk comes to visit the community regularly while the doctor comes for the first time. These two people are positioned as resisters because they question and criticize the bureaucracy that supports the bad government officials to stay while it ignores those who devote themselves to help the oppressed people. At the same time, the monk and the doctor also exercise the dominant power over the Karen community as they are the representatives of the dominant group who provide the better opportunity to the Karen people in terms of education and health care. The arrival of the monk and

the doctor, therefore, suggests that without them the Karen community would not be able to live a better life. Interestingly, the monk, though, tries to help the Karen people to have a better quality of life, at the same time his words also oppress their own group. The monk tells Pela Pho that he does not want to see his son unmitigated in the forest so that he would like to take him to the school. Additionally, the Karen people also oppress their own group. Pela Pho's friend who asks the monk to take his son with him says,

“... พวกเราเป็นยางอะไรๆ มันก็เป็นยางไปหมดคำพูดคำจา กิริยาท่าทาง ก็เป็นยางเหมือนพ่อแม่มัน พระเอามันไปอบรมสั่งสอนก็ดีแล้ว”

“...We're savage *Yang*. Our words, our manners are all savage. Our children are just like us. Please teach and educate them.” (Mala, 2014, p. 181)

The monk then responds to him:

“สูววงใจเถอะเรื่องนั้น ท่านพูด อยู่ทางนี้ไม่ต้องเป็นห่วงเป็นหมัน เราไม่เอาลูกสูไปใช้งานเป็นวัว เป็นควายอย่างมีคนเข้าใจหรอก อยู่ทางนี้ก็หมั่นทำมาหากิน อย่าขอป้อขอซี หรือสูบฝิ่นกินเหล้าให้ มากนัก เงินทองฮิมาหาได้ก็เก็บๆ ไว้มั่ง เพื่อเจ็บเป็นเย็นร้อนพวกสูนี้เสียอยู่อย่างได้สับจ่ายสับ ได้ ร้อยจ่ายร้อย ไม่รู้จักอดจักออม อย่างนี้แหละพวกคนพื้นราบเขาถึงว่าสูเป็นยางคือไม่มีหัวคิด”

“You can trust me and don't worry about your son. I do not tend to use the child labor as some people misunderstood it. You should work hard and don't spend money just on liquor or opium. If you don't make it, you will deserve to be called savage and unthoughtful *Yang* by those lowland people.” (Mala, 2014, p. 182)

The monk exercises the power of domination over the Karen community due to the stereotypical image of the group. The Karen people, at the same time, exercise the power of collusion by not arguing with his comments on their own group. Their silence suggests that they accept what people think about them.

There are a few female characters in this story, and most of them have small roles. The most significant female character among a few is No Thikha, Mo Ngepho's mother. She is a widow and has to look after her six children. It is definitely hard for a single mom like her to do this duty alone. As a result, she and her children always

suffer from hunger. Once, her eldest son, Mo Ngepho, asks why she did not remarry someone who could help her with hard work. She then answers him that, “หญิงหม้ายไม่ควรจะมีตัวใหม่ ปาเกอะญอเรายึดถืออย่างนั้น” [“A widow should not remarry according to the Karen tradition”] (Mala, 2014, p. 82). Her son questions her why someone did. She explains to him that his father was a good man, so she does not want him to feel bad in the underworld. Her strong belief and practice based on the Karen tradition severely oppresses her because working too hard results in her weak health. She finally dies and left a very heavy burden to her eldest son. No Thikha colludes with the power of domination by staying silent about her oppression as a female because she is not aware of these gendered power relations and just considers them as the cultural practices of her community.

The story closes with the parting scene of Nu Pho and Mo Ngepho. The first one has to leave his home in the mountain to another place far away, which ideologically has a better life waiting for him. The latter has to stay in the same place to take a role of a father and a mother for his little five siblings while he himself still does not know what his future will be. The ending is fixed and suggests that only the haves would be provided with a better opportunity in their lives while the have-nots never have the same opportunity. Thus, social class actually matters in this story.

Luk Pa is also narrated from a third-person omniscient point of view. Through this type of narration, the readers are allowed to know everything that has happened in the story and are also provided with different subject positions to view the story.

Mueangkham is the first person who exercises dominant power over Yachi by calling him *Yang* when he comes to apologize to him for his misconduct. He speaks to Yachi:

“ไฉ่ย่างไว้ย!”

“ไฉ่ย่างไว้ยข้าขอโทษแก!”

เมื่อคำหมนต์มองหาคณิงป็น แล้วอ้าปากหวอ

“แกไฉ่ย่าง”

“ข้าชื่อยาชิ”

“ข้าจะได้กินได้ไก่ที่ไร แกตะเพิดมันไปทุกที่ แกจะเอายังไงกับข้าวะ ไฉ่ย่าง?”

“ข้าไม่ใช่ไฉ่ย่าง ชื่อข้ามีเรียกชื่อสิ”

“เออ แกจะเอายังไงกับข้าวะ ไฉ่ยาชิ”

“Savage Yang!”

“Savage Yang! I’m sorry.”

Mueangkham turned around to look for a person who was firing. Then his mouth was widely open.

“You’re here! Savage Yang.”

“My name’s Yachi.”

“Whenever I will get a bird or a chicken, your fire frightened them. What do you really want, savage Yang?”

“I’m not a savage Yang. Please call my name.”

“Ok. What do you really want, Yachi?” (Mala, 2008, pp. 16-17)

Actually, Mueangkham has a negative image with the Karen people because those who come to meet with his father have a foul odor. His mother does not like them either. He calls Yachi *Yang* because it is a common practice among the Northerners and even other ethnic groups to refer to the Karen as *Yang*. So, Mueangkham might not think that he has done anything wrong. Yachi resists his power of domination by not accepting the discrimination against his ethnicity. After that, Mueangkham becomes his good friend and never treats him badly again. However, Yachi has to experience discrimination again when he goes to school. Wichai, his Northern classmate, verbally and physically bullies him. Once, he mocks him: “ว่าไง ไฉ่ย่างขี้ไม่ล้างก้น” [“Hey! You savage *Yang* never clean up after pooping”] (Mala, 2008, p. 86). It is Mueangkham who gets mad with Wichai and argues:

“แล้วมันหนักกะโหลกอะไรของแก วิชัย?”

“อย่าเลือกเมืองคำ ไม่ใช่เรื่องของมึง”

“แต่ยาชิเป็นเพื่อนกู”

“Is it your business, Wichai?”
“Keep your nose out of my business, Mueangkham.”
“But Yachi’s my friend.” (Mala, 2008, p. 87)

It is quite obvious that the Karen people collude with the Northerners’ power of domination by accepting the position of inferiority given to them. Yachi colludes with his classmate’s domination by remaining silent. He does not take any action because his father teaches him to be patient and avoid using any violence. Yachi’s father even addresses himself as *Yang* and accepts that he has personal hygiene issues when he comes to ask for help from Mueangkham’s father as the headman of the village:

“มาหาข้าหรือ?”
“หาพ่อหลวง”
“ใช่ ข้านี้แหละพ่อหลวงแก้ว สู่จะมาแจ้งความอะไร?”
อาคันตุกะผู้มาเยือนท่าทางและสำเนียงบอกให้รู้ว่าเป็นคนคอยเผ่าอย่าง ชายผู้นั้นปลดยามจะยอม
นั่งลงกับพื้น แต่พ่อหลวงแก้วขุดมือให้ลูก
“นั่งบนตั่งด้วยกันเถอะ”
“สู่เป็นพ่อหลวง ข้าเป็นยาง”
“ยางก็คน พ่อหลวงก็คนเหมือนกัน ก็นี่แหละ”
“ข้ากลัวหากกลัวเห็บจะติดสู่”

“Did you come to see me?”
“I want to see the headman.”
“Yes, I’m the headman. Do you want to report anything?”
The visitor’s gesture and accent indicated that he was a *Yang*. He removed his bag and went to sit on the ground, but the headman pulled his hand to lift him up.
“Please sit on the stool together.”
“You’re the headman, but I’m a *Yang*.”
“You and I are both human beings.”
“I’m afraid that I’ll be the cause of lice infestation.” (Mala, 2008, pp. 27-28)

The headman is a Northerner who turns against discrimination. As the headman of the village, he treats all the villagers as human beings regardless of their ethnicity. He tells Yachi’s father that Thai or *Yang* are the same; they are both good and bad people. Yachi’s father completely agrees and fully respects him. It is quite clear that

both the headman and his son are positioned as resisters due to their resistance with discrimination against the ethnic minorities while Yachi's father is a colluder and Yachi himself exercises both the power of collusion and resistance. Sutho is another Karen who is positioned as a colluder. He feels embarrassed to let other people know his ethnic identity by changing his name to standard Thai and ignoring Yachi, his ethnic friend.

It is worth mentioning that the author intends to comment on the way that the members in dominant culture always use the derogatory terms to address the non-dominant groups by letting some characters mention this issue. In a conversation between Yachi's father and a teacher, the two people discuss:

“พวกเราจะความจริงเรียกว่า เกื้อหวะ” พ่อยาชิพูด “เหมือนกับพวกเราชาวยาง ความจริงเรียกว่า ปาเกอะญอ ลัวะไม่ชอบถูกเรียกว่าลัวะหรือ ปาเกอะญอเราก็ไม่ชอบถูกเรียกว่ายาง มันเป็นการดูถูกเหยียดหยามกัน”

“พวกผมก็เหมือนกันแหละครับลุง” ครูให้ความเห็น “เราเรียกตัวเองว่า คนเมือง แต่ชาวใต้ชอบเรียกว่า ลาว ทำไมคนต้องดูถูกเหยียดหยามกันก็ไม่รู้ ไม่มีเหตุผลเลย เกิดมาก็เปลือยตัวออกมาจากท้องพ่อท้องแม่เหมือนกัน ไม่มีใครวิเศษกว่าใครหรือ ค่าของคนไม่ได้อยู่ที่กำเนิดหรือเชื้อชาติ อยู่ที่การกระทำมากกว่า ลุงว่าจริงไหมครับ?”

“Lua calls themselves Koe Wa,” said Yachi's father. “Same as us, *Yang* people actually address our community Pga-gan-Yaw. Lua dislikes to be referred to as Lua. All of us, Pga-gan-Yaw, are not happy to be called *Yang* either. It's an insulting.”

“We are in the same situation.” The teacher expressed his opinion. “We call ourselves Khon Mueang, but the southerners²⁷ always call us Lao. Why do human beings have to discriminate against one another? There are no reasons to do that at all. We were all born into the world with nothing. No one is better than anyone else. The value of human beings is not related to their ethnicity, but what they have done. Do you think so?” (Mala, 2008, p. 45).

Though the Karen people do not like to be derogatorily called *Yang*, it is surprising that they always address themselves by this term as can be seen throughout the story. In fact, the readers know well that it is the author who makes this happen.

²⁷ The Northern people usually refer to Bangkok people as the southerners due to their geographical location.

In this story, education is still the way that the Thai government exercises dominant power over the ethnic groups. Yachi's, Mueangkham's, and Sutho's fathers want their children to further their studies in a higher level because they think that it will allow their children to have a good future. Yachi's father tells him:

“...พ่อถึงอยากให้คุณเรียนสูงๆ ได้เป็นครูมีเงินเดือน จะได้สบาย ไม่ต้องทุกข์ยากอย่างพ่อ”

“...I want you to study in a higher level so that you can work as a teacher. Then you will have a salary and a good life, and not face a hardship like me.” (Mala, 2008, p. 148)

Though both Mueangkham's and Sutho's fathers do not have socioeconomic issues as Yachi's father does, education for them, is still the way for their children to succeed. As a result, all fathers collude with the Thai government's domination by means of education, and their collusion influences their children. As Yachi tries his best to further his studies so that he can come back to teach the Karen children, Yachi colludes to gain agency.

Yachi's family's low socioeconomic status, however, does not allow him to finish his school despite the fact that he is a good student and has excellent academic performance. He knows well that he cannot make his wish come true without a scholarship. His teacher even comes to the village to help him review the lessons to compete with other students. Unfortunately, he misses the scholarship and even the one he has been granted later is not enough to cover his expenses at school. When his father can no longer work hard, Yachi decides to drop out of school to work for him. On the contrary, Mueangkham is not quite good at his studies, but his family's socioeconomic status provides him with an opportunity to go to school. Sutho, even if he is a Karen, his family's socioeconomic status is much better than Yachi's. Both Mueangkham and Sutho thus are able to further their studies without any difficulty. What has happened to Yachi, Mueangkham, and Sutho makes it clear that the power relations of ethnicity and class are implicated.

Yachi's decision to drop out of school might be due to his family's socioeconomic status, but it also suggests that, for him, education is not the most important thing in life. When he meets with his teacher who reviewed the lessons for him to complete the scholarship, he tells him that he never regrets his lack of opportunity to pursue his studies. His teacher thus encourages him:

“การไม่ได้เรียนหนังสือไม่ได้หมายความว่าเราล้มเหลวหรือก่นะยาชิ” ครูพูด “ความสำเร็จและล้มเหลวไม่ได้อยู่ที่การเรียนหนังสือเสมอไป แท้จริงมันเป็นเพียงส่วนประกอบอย่างหนึ่งของชีวิตเท่านั้น มีคนอีกมากที่พบความสำเร็จได้โดยไม่ได้เรียนหนังสือ ครูหวังว่ายาชิจะเป็นอีกคนในจำนวนนั้น”

The lack of chance to go to school doesn't mean that you fail, Yachi, said the teacher. “Success or failure doesn't depend on whether you go to school or not. In fact, it is just a part of life. There are a lot of people who succeed by not going to school. I hope that you'll be another of those people. (Mala, 2008, p. 162)

Yachi's reaction and his teacher's opinion make it clear that they do not consider education as the only way to succeed in life.

Male dominated and patriarchal power relations are very obvious in this book because there is not a single female character who has a role in the story. The only female mentioned is Mueangkham's mother, but she never appears. Moreover, it is the fathers of the three young adult characters who influence their children's lives. They specially take important parts in deciding for their lives.

The story ends with Yachi's teacher's and father's words of encouragement. Both of them encourage the young guy not to be regretful for missing the opportunity to further his studies, and hope that he would have a new goal for his life, and would accomplish it finally. The ending is open for the readers to question about Yachi's life.

Production Practices of Text Collection about Hmong People

The single book included in this cluster is *Mai Mae*. I summarize the significant information about this book in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Text Collection about Hmong People

Title	First Publication	Ethnoregional/ Ethnic Group	Main Character's Name/Gender	Point of View
<i>Mai Mae</i>	1998	Hmong	Mai Mae/Female	Third-person limited

This book by Phanumat Phumthawon, is a story about a Hmong girl in Northern Thailand. It is her second young adult fiction that was published in a magazine before being compiled and published in 1998. The latest edition was published in 2004. The book won the honorary mention award from the National Book Fair in 1999. The author, Phanumat, was born in Sukhothai, the upper central province of Thailand. She studied Thai at Pibulsongkram Teacher's College. Due to the 6 October event ²⁸she needed to escape to live in the jungle until 1981.



Figure 7. *Mai Mae* by Phanumat Phumthawon

²⁸ It was an attack by Thai state forces and far-right paramilitaries on student protesters who opposed the return to Thailand of the three military dictators: Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn, Field Praphas Chausathien, and Colonel Narong Kittikachorn, who fled Thailand after the 14 October 1973 uprising. The event took place on the campus of Thammasat University and the adjacent Sanam Luang Square in Bangkok on October 6, 1976. More than a hundred student activists were killed, and over 3,000 were arrested for allegedly being communists and threats to Thailand's monarchy. Consequently, many students fled to the jungle to join the Communist guerrillas.

Representation of Hmong People in Text Collection

The Hmong people in this book are those who live in a village referred to as Phu Wi Wia in Northern Thailand. They are portrayed as those who live a simple life and work hard in order to survive. Most of them barely stop working unless it is a special occasion like the New Year Day. They grow rice and corn to earn money, and vegetables and sugar cane for their own consumption. Further, they raise some animals like chickens and pigs at home. Additionally, the Hmong people in the story are depicted as those who turn against opium production. As in the past there were a lot of people addicted to opium, therefore, the headman of the village allows only a few elderly people to grow opium to smoke while growing it for trading is prohibited.

Also, the Hmong are portrayed as marginalized people due to their distance from having access to education. The main character of the story, Mai Mae, a 13 year-old-girl living with her adoptive parents has just finished grade six and wants to further her studies at a school in her village. However, she has no school to attend due to the government's policy to close all schools in remote areas. Mai Mae requested her father to send her to study at a school outside her village, but he denied her request and told her that a girl is supposed to be with her parents at home. Not only does Mai Mae want to go to school, but the other Hmong children want to also. When there is no more school, Mai Mae agrees to her father's idea to teach the Hmong children by herself because she would like them to be literate. Finally, there are 15 students in her class. What Mai Mae has done indicates that the Hmong people try to help themselves and do not just rely on the government to help them.

It is worth noting that though they try very hard to rely on themselves, the Hmong people still need to be supported by the outsiders from Bangkok, to accomplish their goals. Dome, a young kind man from Bangkok, who has been assigned by his company to illustrate rare wild birds in this Hmong village, teaches Mai Mae how to

make papers from bamboo so that her students can write on it instead of their own black boards. It is this young man who takes Mai Mae out of her village to learn more about life in town. Mai Mae hardly travels to town due to its long distance from her village. When Dome has to do some business in town, he asks Mai Mae to go with him. Thus, Mai Mae has an opportunity to see and learn new things in the new surrounding which is absolutely different from her village. She eats in a local restaurant; she dresses like a town girl, she stays in a local hotel. Dome also asks his friends in Bangkok to buy a teacher's handbooks for Mai Mae. Most importantly, it is him who asks his friends from Bangkok to convince Mai Mae's father to allow her to pursue her studies in town while he volunteers to teach the village children during her absence.

Exercise of Power among Characters in Text Collection about Hmong People

This story is told from the third-person limited perspective through the eyes of the main character, Mai Mae. Thus, the readers need to follow her everywhere throughout the story. This single point of view provides them with a single subject position to view the story.

Mai Mae and other Hmong children in her village had an opportunity to be formally educated because there was a school open in her village under the condition that a teacher would come to teach at school for 22 days consecutively in each month. In the past years, none of the teachers could teach at this school that long. However, the last female teacher wanted to stay longer to teach the children. Unfortunately, the school needed to be closed due to the government's policy to close any school located in the remote areas. This policy has a big impact on the Hmong children. Though the education system is one institution that imposes the Central Thai culture on ethnoregional and ethnic groups, formal education, at least, can provide resources and experiences to

Protect children from exploitation as stated by Mai Mae, “เรียนมากๆ จะได้ไม่ถูกหลอก ไม่มีใครมาตักตวงว่าเราโง่” [“I want to study more so that nobody can deceive me. I don’t want to be fooled”] (Phanumat, 2004, p. 16). Thus, not providing the Hmong children with an equal opportunity to have access to the essential services like education completely marginalizes them.

Mai Mae herself is also marginalized due to her gender. Her father does not allow her to study in a higher level just because she is a female. He says to her: “...เจ้าเป็นผู้หญิงนะไหม ผู้หญิงก็ต้องอยู่บ้านกับพ่อแม่” [“...you are a female, and all females are supposed to stay with their parents”] (Phanumat, 2004, p. 16). According to the Hmong cultural practices, women are supposed to stay with their parents until they grow up enough to get married while men are given more opportunity to go to school. Hue, Mai Mae’s cousin, is a good example. He is allowed to further his studies at a school in town even though his academic performance is not as good as Mai Mae’s. Thus, Mai Mae is very jealous of him and repeatedly asks her father to send her to school. However, Hue finally drops out of school because he is homesick and does not enjoy school life in town.

Though her father disagrees to send Mai Mae to study in town, he inspires her to teach the village children after the village school is closed as he believes that his daughter has enough knowledge to teach. Mai Mae decides to do as her father suggested since she wants to carry on her last teacher’s mission to help educate the children in her village. What Mai Mae has done suggests that she exercises both the power of collusion and agency. As a colluder, she unconsciously supports the Thai government’s educational system that dominates her ethnic culture because she takes advantage of the collusion. At the same time, she demonstrates the power of agency by reopening the school to educate the Hmong children. Mai Mae colludes to gain agency.

The Central Thai people, or Bangkok people in particular, have an important role in supporting Mai Mae and the Hmong community. Their support indicates the power of domination over the Hmong people since it suggests that without Dome's and his friends' help Mai Mae might not be able to make her wish to further her study in a higher level come true. Dome's two female friends are able to convince Mai Mae's father to change his view about gender equity. Moreover, the village school might not have been able to continue to be open if Dome had not volunteered to cover Mai Mae while she was going to school. Dome and his two friends therefore represent the Central Thai dominant power.

However, as a male character who supports the female role, Dome is also positioned as a resister. He encourages Mai Mae to value her femininity and points out to her that men and women are equal:

“...พี่โตมว่าไหมแมควรจะได้ไปเรียนต่ออีกสักหน่อย”

“พ่อไม่ให้ไปค่ะ บอกว่าเป็นผู้หญิง”

“ไม่จริงหรอก ผู้หญิงผู้ชายก็มีความสามารถเท่ากัน เพียงแต่ผู้หญิงไม่ค่อยมีใครให้โอกาสสักเท่าไร โลกใบนี้สร้างด้วยมือของผู้หญิงครึ่งหนึ่งนะไหมแม สมัยก่อนก็ยังมีผู้หญิงออกรบเคียงบ่าเคียงไหล่กับผู้ชายมาแล้วมากมาย ทั้งที่มีชื่อในประวัติศาสตร์กับที่ไม่มีชื่อก็คงมีอีกมาก ฉะนั้น อย่าดูถูกตัวเอง เข้าใจไหม” ไหมแมแปลกใจที่พี่โตมไม่ได้มองว่าผู้หญิงไร้ค่าทำอะไรไม่ได้เหมือนพ่อกับลุงยี่มมอง

“...I think that you should further your studies a little bit more.”

“My dad doesn't allow me to. He said I'm a girl.”

“That's not true. Men and women have the same abilities. Just only women are rarely provided with an opportunity to prove themselves. Do you know that half of our world was created by women? In the past women also fought in the battle with men. Some of their names have been recorded in the history while many names have not. So, don't look down yourself.” Mai Mae was quite surprised that Dome did not view women as worthless as her father and uncle did. (Phanumat, 2004, pp. 73-74)

Overall, Dome is the male character who has a very significant role in the book that has a female character as a central character. He exercises the power of domination as a member of the dominant culture, the resistive power as a male supporter of women, and the power of agency as a benefactor of the Hmong community.

The story ends happily with Mai Mae and Dome's laughter. Dome praises Mai Mae for what she has done as a little girl, and it makes him feel embarrassed with a need to improve himself. Mai Mae also encourages him that from now on he has to work harder to teach the Hmong children. The closure is fixed and leaves the readers with the interpretation that the Hmong community cannot rely on the Thai government, but they have to help themselves to survive. At the same time, it seems like they cannot stand on their own feet without help from the outsider, particularly those from Bangkok.

Production Practices of Text Collection about Tai Yai People

The single book included in this cluster is *Hupkhao Saengtawan*. I summarize the significant information about this book in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Text Collection about Tai Yai People

Title	First Publication	Ethnoregional/ Ethnic Group	Main Character's Name/Gender	Point of View
<i>Hupkhao Saengtawan</i> (<i>The Valley of Sunlight</i>)	1976	Tai Yai	La Bun/Female	Third-person limited

Hupkhao Saengtawan is a book about a Tai Yai girl, her teacher, and her community in Mae Hong Son Province in Northern Thailand. The author, Phibunsak Lakhonphon, created this book based on his teaching experience at a small school situated in a village in Mae Hon Song Province. This book was the author's first novel and first published in 1976. The latest edition was published in 2001.



Figure 8. *Hupkhao Saengtawan* by Phibunsak Lakhonphon

Representation of Tai Yai People in Text Collection

The Tai Yai people in this story live in a small village, Huai Kham Soeng, in Mae Hong Son Province in Northern Thailand. The village is situated in the valley usually shrouded in mist and far away from town. The villagers live a simple life and have to work hard to survive every day. According to their cultural practices, men are supposed to work harder by plowing the rice field while women grow rice. Even though they work hard, they still live in poverty. The Tai Yai children are required to learn and speak standard Thai at school. This requirement has a big impact on their academic performance because most of them do not understand the lessons taught in classes. Also, the famine has affected their academic performance when the children who have no lunch to eat are unable to do as well as those who eat enough. Moreover, the villagers are not able to have access to medical care though there is a doctor on duty in the village. This had happened because the doctor was never available.

The Tai Yai people are also depicted as those who need help from the dominant group. The new teacher, Macha, who comes from Bangkok realizes about what has happened to the Tai Yai children and tries to help them learn. He also spends his free time after work to visit the students' homes, talk to their parents, ask about their

problems and tries to figure it out how he can help them. This new teacher is widely admired and liked by the villagers and his students. La Bun, an 11-year-old Tai Yai girl, likes this new teacher very much because he is always in a good mood and makes the classroom full of laughter. He later moves into the girl's house. So, La Bun has a chance to learn more about her teacher, and he also learns more about the Tai Yai people's way of life. One day, Macha travels back to visit his family in Bangkok. When realizing that La Bun is curious to know more about the capital city after listening about it from him, he decides to take the girl with him. This teacher not only helps improve the Tai Yai people's quality of life, but also gets involved in the crisis situation when Kang Choa, the head of Red Karen village and his brother are captured by the independent Karen. Unfortunately, the policemen ignore their disappearance, so Macha helps handle the situation by traveling with the head of the village to meet with the sheriff. After the negotiation between the Thai government officials and the independent Karen, Kang Cho and his brother are free and return to their village. Macha also helps contact the district office to build a school for the Red Karen children. By this it means both the Tai Yai and the Red Karen still have to rely on the dominant group.

Exercise of Power among Characters in Text Collection about Tai Yai People

This book is told from a third-person limited point of view through both La Bun and Macha. However, it is through Macha's perspective that allows the readers to know more about what has happened in the story both in the village where he teaches and the Red Karen's village. The readers thus are offered more than one perspective to view the story.

In this story the Thai government exercises the power of domination over the Tai Yai by means of educational system and standard Thai as can be seen in other stories. Macha, a new teacher from Bangkok, experiences this domination from his teaching in the classrooms and reflects it through his thoughts: “ทำไมเด็กทุกคนจะต้องพูดภาษากลางนะ เขาคิดคำถามขึ้นกับตัวเองเงียบๆ” [“Why do all children have to speak standard Thai? He asked himself silently.”] (Phibunsak, 2001, pp. 24-25). This question comes up to his mind because the use of standard Thai in the classrooms limits the Tai Yai children to learn, understand, and enjoy the lessons. When the teachers explain anything to them in standard Thai and they cannot understand, the lessons thus become boring for them. In his opinion, it is the teacher who should learn the students’ language to communicate with them. Moreover, he questions the textbooks which were written just to serve the town children since the content of these books is based on their contexts and is not relevant to the Tai Yai children’s lived experience at all:

แบบเรียนที่ล้มเหลว สื่อความหมายที่ล้มเหลว หนังสือที่สร้างขึ้นสำหรับเด็กๆ ในเมือง “บ้านฉันมีสวนทุเรียน...” รูปร่างมันเป็นอย่างไรวะ เพราะที่หมู่บ้านนี้มีแต่หมากกลาง (ขนุน) มีแต่หมากผ่า (มะนาว) มีแต่หมากขางพอ (มะละกอ)

The textbooks are a failure. They cannot communicate with the learners because they were written for town children. “My house has a durian orchard...” What does a durian look like? There are only jackfruits, limes, and papayas here (Phibunsak, 2001, p. 25)

Durian is an oval spiny tropical fruit which is planted and sold across the country, but it is quite costly and might not be available in the area where the Tai Yai people live, especially during the time that this book was written. It is assumed that most textbooks used in Thai schools might be written by scholars who are the members of dominant culture. Therefore, they created the texts based on their lived experience as a dominant group and unconsciously ignore the existence of marginalized groups.

Additionally, the Thai government exercises dominant power by means of standard Thai over the Tai Yai villagers. Since standard Thai is used as a medium of communication by the government officials, the Tai Yai villagers thus feel hesitate to speak to them in their own language. At the same time, they do not want to take the risk to speak the language which they are unable to speak well. As a result, they just follow what they have been told without any argument. The domination of standard Thai makes those villagers who can speak it feel like they are literate people while those who cannot understand it feel inferior. From Macha's perspective, it is the government official who should learn to speak the villagers' language, not the villagers who need to learn standard Thai. Macha's questions about the education and standard Thai position him as a resister who challenges the Thai government's dominant power. Also, he exercises the power of agency by changing the way to teach the Tai Yai children. He tries to learn the students' language to communicate with them in the classroom. By this, he allows the students to use their linguistic repertoire as the resources to learn standard Thai as a second language:

หลานบุญชอบครู เพราะครูสอนเราด้วยอารมณ์ดี ตั้งแต่ครูย้ายมาสอนห้องเรา ห้องเรามีแต่เสียงหัวเราะ อยู่เสมอ ไม่เหมือนห้องอื่นๆ ที่ครูเอาแต่ตะโกน และเอาไม้ฟาดกระดานปังๆ และหวดหัวนักเรียน ตั้งแต่วันนั้นมาเราก็เริ่มอ่านหนังสือแตก อ่านคำใหม่ๆ ได้คล่องและมีเพลงใหม่ๆ ร้องไม่ขาด...

La Bun liked her teacher because he taught with a good mood. After coming to teach us, our class was always full of laughter. The teachers of other classes just yelled at students, hit the blackboard with a stick, and beat the students' heads. From now on we are able to read better. We even can read new vocabulary words more fluently. Further, we have a lot of new songs to sing. (Phibunsak, 2001, p. 49)

From La Bun's perspective, the other teachers exercise the power of domination over the students which make them unhappy and results in their unproductive learning. What Macha has done helps the students learn with happiness and productivity. More interestingly, Macha also demonstrates resistive power and suggests agency by supporting the head of the Tai Yai village to help Kang Choa, the head of Red Karen

village and his brother who were captured by the independent Karen. As the policemen ignore their disappearances so the head of the Tai Yai village and Macha help handle the situation by traveling to meet with the sheriff. Macha speaks to the villagers in the meeting:

“มันไม่เป็นการยุติธรรมที่ก้างใจจะถูกละเลยเพราะเขาเป็นคนไทยคนหนึ่ง และเขาก็มีชื่ออยู่ในหมู่บ้านของเรา เขามีทะเบียนบ้านซึ่งถือว่าเขาเป็นคนไทยคนหนึ่ง จึงเป็นการผิดที่คนมาจากที่อื่นมาจับตัวเขาไป และที่สำคัญที่สุดที่จะให้เรานิ่งเฉยไม่ได้ คือเขาเป็นคนดี”

“It’s not fair that Kang Choa has been ignored because he’s also a Thai citizen. He’s a member of the village so that it’s not right that the outsiders ‘re capturing him. We need to help him because he’s a good man.”
(Phibunsak, 2001, p.144)

After the negotiation between the Thai government officials and the independent Karen, Kang Cho and his brother were free and return to their village. Macha also helped contact the district office to build a school for the Red Karen children. However, it is noteworthy that since Macha is a member of a dominant culture, the way in which a Bangkok born teacher like him becomes a resister and also attains agency in both the Tai Yai and Red Karen communities emphasizes the Central Thai domination, or Bangkok in particular, over the ethnic minorities.

The poverty of Tai Yai community is clearly seen through Macha’s perspective. Once in the classroom he asked his students, “มีใครกินข้าวกลางวันมาแล้วบ้าง” “Who’ve already finished your lunch?”] (Phibunsak, 2001, p. 30). Only a few students raise their hands which surprise him:

“มันไปไล่กิน” (มันไม่ได้กิน).” เด็กที่ยกมือโพล่งขึ้น
มันอาย (มันอาย) มันไปมีกิน (มันไม่มีกิน)...” เสียงเด็กที่ยกมือ ซึ่งส่วนมากคุ่นๆ หน้าเป็นลูกของพวกที่พอมีพอกินเป็นส่วนใหญ่ ซึ่งบางบ้านก็มีนามาก บางบ้านก็มีร้านขายของ เด็กพวกนี้เรียนเก่งต่างหัวเราะชอบใจ

“They’ve not yet eaten.” The child who raised hand spoke out.
“They’re shy. They don’t have food to eat...” The voices came from the familiar faces of those children who were born in middle-class families. Some of their families occupied a lot of paddy fields and some owned

stores. These children had good academic performance. They laughed with pleasure. (Phibunsak, 2001, p. 30)

Macha has just realized that the majority of his students do not eat lunch because of their family's low socioeconomic status. He feels bad that he might hurt those have-nots by raising this topic in the classroom. However, his question makes it clear to him that those who can do well at school are the haves while the have-nots cannot concentrate on their lessons when their stomachs are growling:

“ครูไม่โทษเธอเลยว่าเธอโง่ เธอไม่ฉลาดเพราะเพียงเธอมีกินน้อยไปหน่อย และเธออ่านหนังสือไม่ได้ เพราะ เธอไม่ได้กินข้าวเท่านั้นเอง” เขาพูดกับตนเอง นึกโกรธตัวเองที่ดูด่าเด็กๆ หัวเสียที่ พวกเขาอ่านอะไรไม่ได้ ทั้งที่สอนซ้ำแล้วซ้ำอีก “เลิกกันที ครูจะเก็บคำด่าทอไว้ในใจ...”

“I don't blame you at all. You're not that smart just because you eat less. You can't read because you don't eat well. He spoke with himself. Also, he got angry with himself that he got mad with those students who were unable to read despite the fact that he repeated the lesson many times. “I won't do that again. I'll keep all curses in my mind.” (Phibunsak, 2001, p. 30)

Besides the hunger issue, the Tai Yai people also have to suffer from the frigid weather at nighttime. Macha himself experiences the difficulty to sleep at night and realizes about the villagers' struggle to survive when most of them do not have enough blankets to cover their bodies while sleeping. He has learned that only a small number of households in the village can sleep well under the thick and warm blankets.

What Macha has learned in the Tai Yai community reminds him of a saying of one of his friends, “ผู้คนแถบชนบทที่ไหนก็เหมือนกัน หนาวหะเหละ มีความยากจนเป็นเสื้อผ้า” [“People who live in rural area are in the same situation. They have poverty as their clothes.”] (Phibunsak, 2001, p. 95). This saying reflects the hardship of the ethnoregional and ethnic groups who live in the remote area of the country which is still very true even though over 40 years has passed after this book was first published.

In terms of power relations of gender, *Hupkhao Saengtawan* is one of the two books among the 15 selected books in this study that has a female youth as a main character. However, it is evident that the main character, La Bun, does not have a

significant role like those young characters in other selected books. Another female character besides La Bun is her mother, but she has a very limited role. It is obvious that La Bun's teacher, Macha, is the character who demonstrates the power of domination, resistance, and agency. By this, this book is another male dominated book like most of the selected books in this study.

The story ends with the conversation between Macha and Kang Choa discussing several issues in the Red Karen community that need to be solved. Kang Choa then calls for a meeting with the villagers to talk about the construction of a temporary school. After the meeting, the Red Karen villagers sing a song happily together as they are enthusiastic to help build a school for their children. The fixed ending suggests that the ethnic minorities have to help themselves to improve the quality of their lives. They cannot just rely on the government to help them. However, they still need help from outsiders like Macha.

Text analysis about ethnoregional and ethnic groups in Northern Thailand reveals that ethnic and social class issues are prevalent in most texts, especially those by Mala Khamchan. All of his books in the text collection -*Dek Ban Doi*, *Muban Apchan*, and *Luk Pa* -raise the issues of ethnicity and social class while gender is not the major issue in any of his books which have male characters as central characters. Also, ethnic issues are the main focus in Phibunsak's *Thungya Si-namngoen* and *Hupkhao Saengtawan*. Interestingly, social class issues are not the focal point in the first book whereas the latter emphasizes the problem of poverty among the Tai Yai community. More interestingly, both of Phibunsak's books do not pay much attention to gender issues. Though one of the books is told from the young female character's perspective, it is also told from an adult male perspective. And this adult male character has a more significant role than the young female character. The only single book that

emphasizes gender issues is *Mai Mae* which was written by a female author, Phanut. This female author created the young Hmong girl, *Mai Mae*, to be the main character in the story, and also focuses on gender issues in the content of the story.

In the following section, I analyze three texts about ethnoregional and ethnic groups in Northeastern Thailand. Two of them are about the Northeastern Thais or Isan people while the only one is about the Vietnamese refugees.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF TEXT COLLECTION II:

BOOKS ABOUT ETHNOREGIONAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS

IN NORTHEASTERN THAILAND

In this chapter, Foucault's theory of power and discourse analysis are also used as a theoretical framework while critical multicultural analysis and critical discourse analysis are used as analytical tools to analyze books that portray the ethno regional and ethnic groups in Northeastern Thailand. I first provide the historical and sociopolitical context of the ethnoregional and ethnic groups. Then, I present the publishing practices of each text. Next, I investigate the representation of ethnoregional and ethnic groups in all of the books. After that, I apply critical multicultural analysis to examine the power relations of ethnicity, class, and gender in the text collection. In addition, I consider focalization, story closure, and language use in each text.

Northeastern Thailand or Isan



Figure 9. Northeastern Region of Thailand (Wikipedia, 2019)

Historical and Sociopolitical Context of Ethnoregional and Ethnic Groups in Northeastern Thailand

Northeastern region or Isan is Thailand's largest region. It is located on the Korat Plateau, bordered by the Mekong River to the north and east, and by Cambodia to the south. The region currently consists of 20 provinces including Amnat Charoen, Bueng Kan, Buriram, Chaiyaphum, Kalasin, Khon Kaen, Loei, Maha Sarakham, Mukdahan, Nakhon Phanom, Nakhon Ratchasima, Nong Bua Lamphu, Nong Khai, Roi Et, Sakhon Nakhon, Sri Saket, Surin, Ubon Ratchathani, Udon Thani, and Yasothon. The majority of Isan people are ethnic Lao who speak Lao or Lao Isan as their native language. The Khmer minority is in the southern provinces of Surin, Buriram, and Sre Saket and some Vietnamese refugees are in Mukdahan and Nakhon Phanom. Moreover, there are other small ethnic minority groups, namely Kuy, Phu Tai, Phuan, and So. For the scope of this study, I discuss only the historical and sociopolitical context of Isan people and Vietnamese refugees.

Northeastern Thais or Isan People

The land of Isan had been under the control of several states, kingdoms, and empires over the last 15 centuries or so. The Khmer Empire of Angkor and the Lao Kingdom of Lan Xang occupied parts of Isan. The Khmer Kingdom was defeated by Ayutthaya, the first Siamese Kingdom, and later the Lao Kingdom of Lan Xang was overthrown by Rattanakosin or Bangkok. However, it was not until the reign of King Chulalongkorn that Isan was shaped and changed. Due to the 1893 treaty with France, all Lao areas of the left bank of the Mekong River were ceded to France which affected the Lao people in Isan became politically separated from their homeland and fell under the authority of the Thai monarchy (Platt, 2013). This separation has resulted in the majority of Isan people who are ethnically Lao and speak Lao as their first language.

Isan is generally known as the poorest region in Thailand and has been for many decades at least. Isan people's poverty is widely understood as a product of the bad climatic conditions due to its sandy soil and drought. In fact, however, Isan people's socioeconomic oppression is partially caused by the Thai government's policy which pays more attention to develop Bangkok as its capital city while neglecting the other regions of the country. Though there was an improvement in the Isan economy in the first decade of the 21st century, many people still struggle to earn a living from farming and making ends meet during the dry season. As a result, many of them are leaving their homes to work in Bangkok and come back before the next farming season.

Vietnamese Refugees

The Vietnamese began immigrating to Thailand about 150 years before World War II (Poole, 1970). This group of Vietnamese has been designated as old Vietnamese by Thai authorities so as to distinguish them from the new refugees who came in 1946 when French forces returned to Indochina. According to Khachatphai (1972), the old Vietnamese has completely assimilated into Thai society due to their small number and length of stay in Thailand. The existence of this group of Vietnamese thus did not cause any problem to the Thai government. However, the situation of Vietnamese refugees who arrived after World War II was different. The Thai government at that time allowed the Vietnamese refugees to settle on the Thai side of Mekong River, employed some of them on public work projects, and provided them with loans to help them settle down. Also, the Thai government offered the refugees a chance to apply for Thai citizenship when they first arrived, but few of them took advantage of the opportunity because they thought that their stay in Thailand was just temporary (Poole, 1970).

Due to the Thai government communist counterinsurgency, however, in 1949, Phibun's government restricted the Vietnamese refugees to reside in the designated

provinces to prevent the spread of Communist influence to major population centers. The refugees were not allowed to leave that province without permission from the local authorities. Also, the law prevented them from learning or speaking Vietnamese. If any parents wished their children to learn Vietnamese, the education had to take place in secret. The Thai government considered the status of the Vietnamese refugees as a serious problem for national security since the early 1950s.

Production Practices of Text Collection about Northeastern Thais

Books included in this cluster are *Luk Isan* and *Kham Ai*. I summarize the significant information about these two books in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Text Collection about Northeastern Thais or Isan People

Title	First Publication	Ethnoregional/ Ethnic Group	Main Character's Name/Gender	Point of View
<i>Luk Isan</i> (<i>A Child of the Northeast</i>)	1976	Northeastern Thai or Isan	Khun/Male	Third-person limited
<i>Kham Ai</i>	1988	Northeastern Thai or Isan	KhamAi/Male	Third-person limited

Luk Isan was written by Khamphun Bunthawi. It was first published in *Fa Mueang Thai* magazine between late 1975 and 1976 before being compiled and published in 1976. The book tells the everyday experiences of a young boy in Northeastern Thailand during the 1930s. It is considered the very first book that tells a story of the Northeasterners' way of life from an insider perspective. Actually, books about Isan people written in Thai by Isan authors arose in the late 1950s. However, their works are involved with Literature for Life²⁹ by reflecting on the oppression of Isan people which is also connected to rural Thailand in general.

²⁹ Literature for Life is a movement of Thai writers who were influenced by Socialist Realism in the 1940s. Based on this concept, a number of Thai writers created short stories and novels that highlight social injustice. Khamsing Srinawk, an Isan writer who writes under the pen name Lao Khamhom is

Khamphun was born in 1928 in Yasothorn Province which at that time was part of Ubon Ratchathani Province. He was selected as a National Artist in Literature in 2001 and died in 2003. Khamphun's works are completely different from those earlier Isan writers in the way that he tells a good story as well as the cultures and traditions of Isan people (Platt, 2013). *Luk Isan* is Khamphun's masterpiece which tells a story of his own childhood in Isan. The book won the award for best novel from the National Books Development Commission in 1976, and was approved by the Ministry of Education to be an outside reading book for high school students. Additionally, this semi-autobiographical novel won the S.E.A. Write Award in 1979, which was the first year that the award was established. *Luk Isan* was made into a film by the famous director, Khunawut, in 1982. The book was translated into English by Susan Fulop Kepner, and was published in Bangkok in 1988 under the title *A Child of the Northeast*. A French translation, *Fils de l'Isan*, appeared in France in 1991. Until now the book has been republished several times in different forms including paperback, hardcover, and graphic novel.

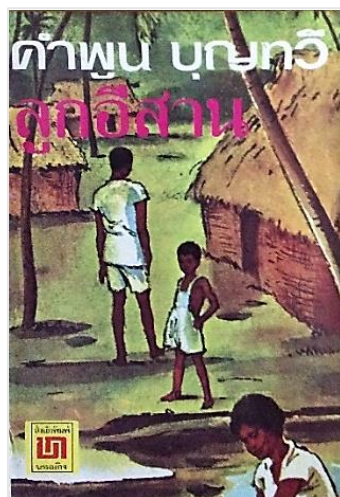


Figure 10. *Luk Isan* by Khamphun Bunthawi

the best example of this movement. *Fa Bo Kan*, his notable satirical short story collection which gives voices to the common peasants, was published in 1958 and translated into nine languages, including English, Swedish, Danish, Dutch, Japanese, Singhalese, Malay, German, and French.

Kham Ai is another book which tells a story about Isan people and has a boy as the main character. It was written by an Isan writer, Prayong Munsan, under the pen name Yong Yasothorn. Yong was born in Kudchum District, Yasothon Province which was previously part of Ubon Ratchathani Province. He worked as a teacher, a news reporter, and a member of Parliament. Due to the 6 October event, he went into the jungle in 1976 and stayed there until 1981.

Kham Ai is his first novel and was first published in 1988. The book won the Bualuang Literary Award³⁰ in 1989. Also, it was selected by the Ministry of Education as one of the books that Thai children should read, and as an outside reading for secondary education. It is evident that *Kham Ai* has not been as widely read and known as *Luk Isan* despite the fact that it has been highly praised by a number of Thai scholars. Platt (2013) states that this might happen because the novel did not win the high profile S.E.A. Write Award or that the audiences might think that reading a single book about the life of a young Isan boy is enough. However, the book has been continuously published as the latest edition came out in 2012.



Figure 11. *Kham Ai* by Yong Yasothorn

³⁰ This award no longer exists.

Representation of Northeastern Thais in Text Collection

Luk Isan tells the story of Northeasterners or Isan people several decades ago. As the author tells the everyday experiences of his childhood as a Northeastern or Isan child, the Isan people in the story are his family, relatives, and neighbors. Most of them are portrayed as those who live a simple life and never feel bad about their hardship. They live in poverty, but they are still happy. It seems like getting enough food to eat is of concern to them.

The Isan child in the story is Khun, an eight-year-old boy who lives with his parents and two little sisters who are five and two years old. Khun's family, like other families in the village, earns their living by growing rice. If the rice crop is good, they will have enough money to buy something in need. However, drought has continued in the village year after year which leads some families to relocate to other villages where they will be able to have a better life. Those who do not want to leave their birthplace, including Khun's father, survive in the dry season by searching for any kind of food which are available for them, such as cicada, non-poisonous snake, mongoose, owl, gecko, and marmot and so on. Throughout the story, we see the villagers gathering to search, prepare, and share food. When the villagers almost run out of rice and fermented fish, they travel in a caravan of oxcarts to hunt for fish in the Chi River which is situated very far from their village.

The Isan people are also depicted as hardworking. One of the negative stereotypes about them is that they are poor due to their idleness. Despite the fact that most of them have low socioeconomic status, most of them struggle to survive by working hard in this story. The parents work hard to ensure that there is enough food for all family members. The children also have to help their parents to search for food.

Men are the head of the family and responsible for hunting food while women cook food, do housework, and look after the children.

The Isan people live in the traditional way. When someone is ill, a folk doctor will be called upon to administer herbal remedies. The Buddhist temple is a center of the community, and the Buddhist monks have an important role in the community. As a school is located in the temple ground, the monks sometimes help teach the children if there are not enough teachers.

Though poverty is still the reality of Isan people, this story focuses more on their traditional ways of life and customs. Superficially, these traditional ways might be impressive since they suggest that Isan people live the simple life and never want to have anything. When looking closely, they also reveal that these people struggle to survive under such difficult conditions, and it seems like they are supposed to accept these living conditions, which are the cultural practices that are passed to them from generation to generation.

Kham Ai is another book, after *Luk Isan* that tells about the Isan people's way of life from the insider perspective and does not depict this ethnoregional group as marginalized people who need help or call attention to anyone. The Isan people in this book are Kham Ai, a 12-year-old boy, his family, relatives, and neighborhood. Kham Ai lives with his parents, two younger brothers, and two younger sisters. The boy is often being teased about his stretched ears and ugliness by his parents and relatives. Most people in Kham Ai's village, including his parents, are farmers who rely on rainfall. Kham Ai himself, though is still young, has to help feed water buffalos and practice plowing with his father. Most villagers experience difficulty when drought happens since there is not enough food to eat. Even the wild yam which most of them eat instead of rice is rare due to the high demand. One of Kham Ai's friends eats

fragrant clay when her family has no more rice to eat. Some villagers decide to move to other places. Many husbands and young men, including Kham Ai's father, left the village to look for jobs in the Central region. As a result, the village is completely silent and lifeless.

Isan people in this story are portrayed as those who believe in legends and ancestral spirits. Most of them believe in the cultural practice of a rocket shooting which is based on a legend about the King of the Sky or *Phaya Thaen*. Based on this belief, a rocket festival is celebrated in the beginning of rainy season to remind *Phaya Thaen* that it's time to let the rains fall. This festival indicates that due to their hardship, Isan people still enjoy life and never give up hope. Most people wear the best clothes they have to participate in the festival. Kham Ai, though, is still young and does not know much about this cultural practice, he is very excited to know that he will have a chance to join in the event. In terms of their belief in ancestral spirits, those who get sick will be cured by a shaman. Once Kham Ai's little sister is deadly sick and her father consults the shaman about her symptoms. The shaman tells him that she would get better if only he brings the family's young water buffalo to worship the ancestral spirits. Consequently, Kham Ai's family has to lose one of the only two water buffalos the family owns, and this loss makes him very sad. What has happened to Kham Ai's family reveals that they are taken advantage of due to their traditional belief. At the same time, it also shows that the Isan people are neglected by the Thai government. When they are unable to have access to modern medical treatment, they have to look after themselves and do whatever they can do to survive.

It is noteworthy that while the Thai government neglects the Isan people, it monitors them carefully when requiring them to follow its law or policy. Once the police officers come to the village to arrest those who cut wood in the forest. Kham Ai's father, one of those who is affected, gets very angry because the officers allow

the wood traders to cut wood, but charge the villagers who just cut it to build their houses. Most villagers are unable to pay the fine and have to let the officers seize their wood. Moreover, the Thai government requires most parents to send their children to school, and if they do not follow, they will be charged.

Exercise of Power among Characters in Text Collection about Northeastern Thais

Luk Isan is told in a third-person limited narration. Khun, the main character, is closely followed throughout the story. It is narrated from the perspective of an adult looking back on his childhood. The readers witness what he sees, thinks, and feels. They also learn about the other characters through his eyes. However, it is noteworthy that though Khun is the main character whom the story is told through, it is his father who is the main focus of the story. As the only boy in the family, Khun is very close to his father.

Dating back to the time that the story took place in the 1930s, Isan people were extremely poor. Most of them earned their living by growing rice, and the productivity depended on the climate. Due to Bangkok-centric policy which makes power centered in this capital city, the people of this region were neglected to live a life of hardship. This situation occurs to Khun's family as well as his relatives and neighbors. However, they exercise the power of collusion by not complaining or blaming the Thai government about the hardship. They choose to control their own destiny by helping themselves and one another to survive.

Domination of the Central Thai is obviously demonstrated by the Bangkok monks who did not allow Khun's grandfather to enter the monkhood in a temple in Bangkok. Khun's father once told him that his father walked barefoot for 13 days

carrying a sack of rice over his shoulder to the town of Korat³¹ before boarding a freight train loaded with pigs bound for Bangkok. When he arrived in Bangkok and found a temple he sought, the monks there would not accept him to ordain because they claimed that he ate raw and dirty food, and that he might not be a human being, but a *phi pop* or malevolent spirit, believed to devour the entrails and particularly the liver of its victims (Khamphun, 2013, p. 13). Khun's grandfather's rejection by the Bangkok monks suggests that Isan people are dehumanized and negatively stereotyped by the dominant group. However, what his grandfather could do was only express his anger before being asked to leave the temple.

The Central Thai power of domination is also represented by means of the educational system. The Isan children are taught to sing the Thai national anthem and speak standard Thai at school. Khun and his peers are taught to say *phom*, which in standard Thai means "I" and is used by a man to refer to himself. In addition, boys are taught to use *khrap* and girls are told to use *kha* (Khamphun, 2013, p. 76) as the polite particles to end a phrase or a sentence. As realistic fiction, most Isan characters are supposed to communicate to one another in Lao. However, it would not be possible for the author to write his book in the language other than standard Thai within the Thai dominant culture. As a result, the use of Lao or Isan is embedded in the conversations throughout the story. Nonetheless, it is quite surprising to hear Khun address himself *phom* and say *khrap* with his parents at the beginning of the story before being taught the standard Thai at school. It is likely that his father teaches him to do so. The way Khun speaks standard Thai at home with his parents represents the domination of the Central Thai over the ethnoregional groups, and also positions him as a colluder. His father also practices collusive power since he wants his son to go to school and be a

³¹ It is another name of Nakhon Ratchasima, one of the major cities of Isan.

good student. He repeatedly tells Khun that he would be able to get a good job if he studies hard. This way, Khun's father supports the Central Thai dominant power in the form of the educational system. He strongly believes that education is the key to his son's success because it can help him to get a good job. Khun is positioned as a colluder because he agrees to do what his father tells him to do.

The Isan and the Chinese people exercise coercive power over the Vietnamese. Isan people, as the dominant group in the Northeast, discriminate against the Vietnamese by referring to them with an offensive name, *Kaeo*. They also stereotype the Vietnamese as dog meat eaters. Khun's father dislikes this ethnic group because the Vietnamese robbed his father on the way back from Korat, after being rejected by the monks in Bangkok. Due to his loathing of the Vietnamese, which is transmitted through his father. Khun's father tells him:

“อย่าไปยุ่งกับมันนักคนพวกนี้”

“เป็นหยัง...” คุณถามทันที

“ไว้กับแกวมันบ่อแล้วจี้กเพื่อ คือมันหัวหมอ”

“Don't do anything with these people.”

“Why?” Khun asked right away.

“Talking to these *Kaeo* people seems endless. They're tricky.” (Khamphun, 2013, p. 12)

The Chinese storekeeper who is called *chek U* also refers to the Vietnamese as *Kaeo*.

He tells Khun's mother not to sell anything to them,

“ขายให้มันทำไมพวกคนญวนคนแกว” เจ็กอุ่ว่า

“ฉันสงสารมันที่ไม่มีกับข้าว” แม่บอก

“ทีหลังอย่าขายให้มัน มันขนเงินไปเมืองญวนหมด ไม่เหมือนอ้าวที่อยู่แต่ที่นี่...” เจ็กอุ่ว่า

“Why did you sell it to those *Kaeo* people?” asked Check U.

“I feel pity for them. They don't have anything to eat with rice,” Khun's mother said.

“Don't sell anything to them. They carry money back to their homeland. Unlike them, I live here my whole life,” said check U. (Khamphun, 2013, p. 32)

His statement suggests that the Vietnamese have never been faithful to the Thai nation which allows them to settle down. Khun's father's hatred towards the Vietnamese, on the one hand, is caused by the personal issue; on the other hand, it is also caused by the fact that the Vietnamese are hardworking and have a better socioeconomic status than the Isan people in general. Khun's mother once says that, “ถ้าพวกเขาคนอีสานเขาอย่างคนแก่วะก็จะมีวันทุกข์ยากปากหมอง” [“If Isan people had been more like the *Kaeo* people, maybe we would not have been so starving.”] (Khamphun, 2013, p. 35). Khun once says to his father:

“ญวนพวกนี้เก่งมากนะพ่อ มันจะปลูกผักหลังบ้าน”

“เก่งก็เก่ง แต่เราต้องเก่งกว่ามันอีก”

“These *Yuan*³² people are so smart, dad. They will grow vegetables in their backyard.”

“Yes, they are. But we need to be smarter.” (Khamphun, 2013, p. 35)

Khun's mother's view suggests that the Vietnamese work even harder than the Isan people while Khun's father's perspective indicates that he feels subordinated by the Vietnamese in terms of socioeconomic status. He might have the same feeling to the Chinese as well since he once asks Khun whether he wants to see the Chinese storekeeper fighting with the Vietnamese peddler, and he would incite them to fight with one another. Though he does not mean to do exactly what he says, his viewpoint represents the power relations of ethnicity and class among the Isan, Chinese, and Vietnamese. Khun practices collusive power by supporting his father, but at the same time, he also resists. He once says that he likes and hates the Vietnamese at the same time (Khamphun, 2013, p. 12). And when his father asks what he would like to do when he grows up, he says that he wants to be the *Kaeo* so that he could peddle several types of goods to people. His dislike is certainly influenced by his father while his admiration

³² *Yuan* is another name that Thai people use to call the Vietnamese.

might come from his own experience with the Vietnamese in terms of their hardworking characteristic.

Patriarchal power relations are represented in the Isan community. As mentioned earlier, Khun's father is actually a main focus of the story. He is the role model for his son, and has a strong influence upon him. He tells his son many stories and teaches him to do many things such as searching for food, using tools, and calculating. Khun is quite proud of his father's intelligence because he can do anything and knows so many things. His father is the head of family. He takes good care of all family members and makes sure that all of them have enough food to eat. He wants Khun to be well educated as much as possible. Khun's mother can do many things, too, but she is mainly responsible for preparing food, cooking, doing housework, and looking after the children. She always accepts her husband's needs though she disagrees with him. For example, she would like to change Khun's name before he starts school, but her husband does not let her do it. She wants to relocate to a new place instead of dying of famine in the arid land, but her husband says he would never leave the land which belongs to his ancestor. Khun's mother exercises the power of collusion by staying silent. She never argues with her husband.

The ending of *Luk Isan* depicts a scene of Khun sitting down with tears running from his eyes, surrounded by his parents, relatives, and villagers, who are gathering on the full moon night that his cousin gives birth to her twin babies. When his father asks,

“ร้องไห้เพราะดีใจใช่ไหมลูก” คุณหญิงกคอให้พอ แล้วยิ้มทั้งน้ำตา

“Son, you're crying because of joy, aren't you?” Khun could only nod.

Then he smiled with tear in his eyes. (Khamphun, 2013, p. 310)

Khun is happy because he indulges on the special occasion. More importantly, this joy reminds him of what he learns from the monk who teaches him, “จำไว้ให้ดี จะบอกให้ ต่อไปอย่าเกลียดฟ้า ฟ้าไม่เคยลงโทษใคร จำได้ไหม” [“Keep in mind that you must never blame the sky. It never punishes anyone.”] (Khamphun, 2013, p. 66). He tells himself that he is of Isan descent and would never blame the sky, which he once thought that it causes drought. The ending thus is closed to the interpretation that the Isan people will never blame anything or anyone for their hardship, but will survive by their own. This ending suggests that they will not do anything to turn against the oppressive practices.

Kam Ai is another story told from a third-person limited point of view. The readers know what has happened in the story through the main character, Kham Ai's eyes, resulting in providing the readers with a single subject position to view the story.

This book was published 12 years after *Luk Isan*, but it seems like the Isan people in this story are still neglected to live a life of hardship as in the former one. The situation which has happened to Khun's family, relatives, and his neighbors also occurs to Kham Ai's family, relatives, and neighbors. Most villagers experience difficulty due to drought which causes a shortage of their staple food, or glutinous rice in particular. Similar to the villagers in *Luk Isan*, some villagers also make a decision to move out from the village to find a better life somewhere else. The same as *Luk Isan*, Isan people in *Kham Ai* exercise collusive power by not complaining or blaming the Thai government for neglecting them to deal with hardship by themselves.

The Thai government's domination over the Isan people not only oppresses them in terms of socioeconomic status, but it also prevents them from having access to modern medical treatment. Kham Ai's family has to lose one of the only two water buffalos they own to worship the ancestral spirits as suggested by the shaman as the

way to save his little sister's life. As the Isan community believes in Animism and Shamanism, their beliefs allow the opportunists to gain advantages from them as what happens to Kham Ai's family.

“ควายตัวไหน ผีโคตรผีเขื้อก็ไม่ว่าทั้งนั้น จะเอาแต่ควายถึกน้อยของเราตัวเดียว” แม่พูดด้วยสีหน้าเหนื่อยห่อแท้ แล้วก็บ่นครวญกับคำอ้ายว่า “เลี้ยงควายให้ผู้อื่นใช้แท้ๆ คำเอ๊ย” คำอ้ายเห็นแม่ไม่สบายใจ จึงเลิกซักถามเดินออกไป

“The ancestral spirits don't want any buffalos but only our young one.” Mother spoke with her tired face while complaining to Kham Ai “We feed this young buffalo for others to use it, my son.” Kham Ai realized that his mother felt bad about what had happened. Then he stopped asking her anything and went out. (Yong, 2012, p. 173)

If only they were able to have access to modern medical treatment, the Isan people might have more options for their lives and might have not been victimized by the opportunists.

As the headman of the village and the teacher come to inform the parents to allow their children to go to school according to the Thai government's policy, Kham Ai's parents and other villagers then send their children to school. Kham Ai is very happy to attend school and he is able to perform very well. Due to their excellent academic performances, the principal comes to persuade Kham Ai's and the other boy's parents to send them to further their studies in a higher level. Kham Ai's parents agreed at first whereas the other boy's parents disagreed due to their financial issues. Finally, the same thing has happened to Kham Ai when his father decides not to send him to school, but wants him to ordain to be a Buddhist novice instead. After considering carefully, he has found that the family needs to have a new house, and a new water buffalo. Importantly, the family still does not have enough rice to eat throughout the year. Kham Ai feels very sad about his father's decision, but he has to accept it because he knows well about his family's financial situation.

คำอ้ายรู้สึกผิดหวังมาก แต่จำรับหนทางชีวิตที่พ่อเลือก แม่เองก็ค่อยตามพ่อ สภาพความแน่นแค้นของครอบครัว เป็นสิ่งที่คำอ้ายรู้เห็นมานานแต่เล็กแต่น้อย มันฝังอยู่ในจิตใจโดยไม่จำเป็นต้องบอกกล่าว แม้จะรู้สึกเสียใจจนต้องแอบร้องไห้ คำอ้ายก็ไม่ทิ้งหนังสือ บางคำคืน หยาดน้ำตาหยดต้องตัวอักษรโดยตัวเองไม่รู้สีก ความผิดหวังครั้งนี้ เจ็บลึกและรวดเร็วเหลือเกิน

Kham Ai felt very disappointed, but he had to accept what his father had chosen for him. His mother conformed with his father. Kham Ai was aware of his family's hardship since he was young and this awareness had been kept in his mind without being told by anyone. Though he felt very sad and had to hide his tears, he never gave up reading. Some nights he unconsciously had his tears dropping on the books. The disappointment was so painful for him. (Yong, 2012, p. 277)

However, he feels bad that his friends who do not have as good academic performance as he does can pursue their studies just because their parents can support them. Poverty is still the major issue that prevents marginalized children like Kham Ai and his Isan peers from having access to education.

The villagers have to encounter the Thai government's power of domination which is represented by the police officers when they come to arrest those who cut wood in the forest. This time Kham Ai's father demonstrates the power of resistance by complaining about the injustice the villagers have to experience. Most of them do not understand why they have to be charged just because they want to cut wood to build their houses:

“แค่เลื่อยไม้มาทำเรือนอยู่ก็ถูกจับ ที่พวกพ่อค้าโรงเลื่อยตัดขนกันอยู่โครมๆ ไม่เห็นจับ”

“เขาว่าเป็นไม้ป่าหวงห้าม” พ่อของเขียวพูดเสียงแผ่ว

“หวงห้าม มันก็ควรหวงห้ามทั้งพ่อค้าด้วย ไม่ใช่หวงห้ามแต่ชาวบ้านจนๆ อย่างเรา อย่างนี้นั่นไม่เป็นธรรมเลย” พ่อพูดเสียงกร้าวคล้ายโกรธจัดจนคำอ้ายต้องรีบถอยหนี พาน้องไปเล่นที่อื่น

“Will we be charged just because we cut wood to build our houses? How about those wood traders? They cut and moved a lot of wood. Why aren't they being charged, too?”

“It's said that they're restricting wood.” Khiao's father said softly.

“If they're restricting wood, they should be restricted for the wood traders too, not just for poor people like us. It's really unfair.” Kham Ai's father angrily scolded. Then, Kham Ai walked away and took his siblings to play somewhere else. (Yong, 2012, pp. 211-212)

The conversation above indicates that the villagers are not treated equally by the police officers. Those officers accuse them of breaking the law by cutting restricted woods. None of the villagers claim to be the owner of the wood because if they do they might be either fined or arrested or both. Finally, all the wood that the villagers exhaustedly cut is forfeited. Kham Ai's father gets upset with what has happened to his family and most villagers because the wood traders have never been charged by doing the same thing. The way the police officers treat the villagers shows the Thai government's dominant power over the poor villagers. Kham Ai, as a child, might be unable to help his father deal with the issue, but on that day, he has learned about "unfairness" which is the term that his father used to define the event.

“ไม่เป็นธรรม” คำพูดของพ่อดังก้องอยู่ในหู คำอ้ายเล่นได้จับน้องไป ก็คิดหาความหมายของมันไป... มันเป็นคำใหม่ ได้ยินในสถานการณ์ที่บีบคั้นความรู้สึกนึกคิดและจิตใจเด็กน้อยมากที่สุดในชีวิต นับแต่เกิดมาและรู้จักความ เหตุการณ์ครั้งนี้คงจะฝังใจคำอ้ายไปตราบนานเท่านาน

“Unfair.” His father's words resonated in his ears. Kham Ai was playing tag with his siblings while thinking about its meaning... It was a new term which he had heard in the situation that oppressed his feeling and mind the most since the little boy was born. This event would be embedded in his memory as long as possible. (Yong, 2012, p. 212)

It is worth mentioning that though Kham Ai might not be able to do anything to fight injustice for his family as well as the other villagers, his acknowledgement about it is a good start for him to learn to resist the power of domination in his coming of age.

Patriarchal power relations are also represented in this book as in *Luk Isan*. Kham Ai's father is responsible for taking care of the farm whereas his mother looks after the children, cooks food for the family members, does the chores, and also helps work in the paddy field sometimes. Kham Ai's father has to leave the village to go up north to Vientiane and down south to the Central region to look for jobs while growing

rice is impossible when there is no rain. It is obvious that Kham Ai's father is the head of the household like Khun's father while their mothers are housewives. However, Kham Ai's mother is not as silent as Khun's mother since she sometimes argues with her husband's dominant power. Once Kham Ai, while looking after the family's water buffalo, is not careful enough and lets it consume rice in another person's field. His father gets mad with him and the water buffalo, so he severely hit both Kham Ai and the animal. His mother, when realizing what had happened, blames his father and both of them argue.

“ตีจนเป็นไข้อย่างนี้ ไม่ใช่ดีสั่งสอนดอก แต่จะตีให้ตาย เจ้าเป็นพ่อคนหยิ่งไฉน” แม่ว่าให้พ่ออย่าง
ไม่ยังปาก พ่อทนฟังไม่ไหว หุนหันลุกหนีจากภาข้าว แม่มองตามด้วยสีหน้าขุ่นเคือง...

“You hit him until he gets sick. You didn't mean to teach him, but wanted him to die. What kind of father are you?” Kham Ai's mother angrily blamed his father. His father then couldn't bear it anymore and got up from the dining pedestal tray in front. His mother resentfully followed him with her eyes. (Yong, 2012, p. 29)

What his mother did suggests that she does her maternal duty to protect her son from his father's violence. At the same time, she also demonstrates power of resistance to male domination by questioning her husband about what he did as a father. Kham Ai's father's power of domination can also be seen through his decision made about his son's future. However, his dominant power is exercised based on the family's financial situation which both Kham Ai and his mother have to collude with because they do not have other options.

The story ends with the morning scene that Kham Ai is getting ready to become a novice as directed by his father. The ending leaves the readers with curiosity that what Kham Ai's life will be after this. Will he be happy with a novice life as his father wants or will he try to go back to school again to fulfill his ambition? And if he still wants to go to school, how can he overcome the difficulty of his family.

Production Practices of Text Collection about Vietnamese Refugees

The single book included in this cluster is *Kiao Bao Na Chok*. I summarize the significant information about this book in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Text Collection about Vietnamese Refugees

Title	First Publication	Ethnoregion/ Ethnic Group	Main Character's Name/Gender	Point of View
<i>Kiao Bao Na Chok</i> (<i>The Overseas Vietnamese of Na Chok</i>)	2004	Vietnamese	Khui/Male	Third-person limited

Another book by Phanumat Phumthawon was first published in 2003. The book was inspired by the true story of the Vietnamese refugees who fled from their home country to live in Ban Na Chok (Na Chok Village) in Nakhon Phanom Province due to the political crisis after World War II. Ban Na Chok is a historical place because Ho Chi Minh also known as Uncle Ho sometimes stayed between 1928 and 1929 while planning a resistance movement in Vietnam. The book was one of the final ten nominees for the S.E.A. Write Award of 2006.

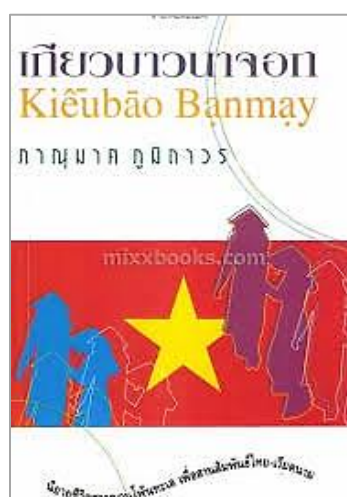


Figure 12. *Kiao Bao Na Chok* by Phanumat Phumthawon

Representation of Vietnamese Refugees in Text Collection

The Vietnamese Refugees in *Kiao Bao Na Chok* are represented by Kwui and his family. Kwui and his nine siblings live in Ban Na Chok, a village of Vietnamese refugees in Nakhon Phanom Province in Northeastern Thailand. His mother passed away. His father grows and sells vegetables while his grown-up siblings have to work to help their family survive. Kwui, as a 13-year-old boy, has to be responsible for bringing up his three brothers. Similar to other Vietnamese boys in the village, Kwui goes to the Thai school and secretly attends the Vietnamese school which is illegally open to teach all subjects in Vietnamese.

Most Vietnamese refugees, including Kwui's family, are an oppressed ethnic minority group in Northeastern Thailand because they are treated differently from the Thai people, or Isan people in particular. Due to the fact that they were born in Thailand, speak standard Thai, and go to Thai school, the offspring of Vietnamese refugees still encounter difficulties because they are not granted Thai citizenship. Their status as non-citizens thus marginalizes them from being eligible to have the basic rights as most Thai people do. Their jobs are limited to just a few things like planting, laboring, and being hired to sell goods in the stores.

The Vietnamese refugees are also depicted as patriots, and at the same time they have a deep gratitude towards Thailand and its people. Most parents secretly send their children to study in the illegal Vietnamese school so that they would not forget their roots. Further, they set up a confidential organization to help free the North Vietnamese. Their patriotism results in their surveillance by the police officers, their lack of freedom, and their feeling of inferiority. The Thai government suspects the Vietnamese villagers of communist ties and does not allow them to leave the area freely. They are monitored and have a lack freedom to travel to wherever they want.

In addition, they are sometimes bullied by local people who consider them as second-class citizens and have no way to fight back. However, their patriotism and inferiority does not affect the good relationship between the Vietnamese and the local people. The parents always teach their children to be grateful to Thai people who offer help to them due to their poverty, especially when they first arrived and settled down in Ban Na Chok.

Exercise of Power among Characters in Text Collection about Vietnamese Refugees

The story of Vietnamese refugees is told from a third-person limited point of view through the main character, Kwui. The readers remain with this character from the beginning to the end of the story. This single point of view thus limits the readers to view the story from single subject position.

The same as other Vietnamese refugees in Ban Na Chok, Kwui and all of his family members are marginalized due to their refugee status. The Thai government exercises dominant power over all Vietnamese refugees by assimilating them to Thai society but not granting the Thai citizenship to those second generation who were born in Thailand and go to Thai school. Due to the national security as claimed, the Thai government limits the Vietnamese refugees' right and freedom to do whatever they want. Their status as non-citizens does not allow them to do anything against the Thai government's surveillance. More importantly, this non-citizen status makes them feel inferior to Thai people. Once Kwui's sister, Chi Lian, warns her brother, Tien, not to go far away from the village and not to look for trouble:

“...เตียน แกต้องเจียมตัวนะ แกเป็นลูกญวนอพยพ ไม่ใช่คนไทย ไปไหนมาไหนอย่าไปมีเรื่องกับใคร เด็ดขาด ถ้ามีเรื่องถึงตำรวจเราก็ติดคุกหัวโต ไม่มีใครฟังเราหรอกเตียน”

“จี้เลียนไม่ต้องตอกย้ำหรอก ว่าเป็นญวน ๆ ๆ รับรองผมไม่ลืมหรอก” เตียนขว้างข้าวเหนียวที่ปั้นเตรียมจะใส่ปากลงกระติบแล้วลุกพรวด “ผมเกลียด ผมเบื่อกิน ทำไมผมต้องเป็นคนญวนให้ใครๆ ต้องคอยจับผิดด้วย ญวนไม่ใช่คนตรงไหน”

“Tien, you must be aware that you’re a son of Vietnamese refugees, not a Thai citizen. Keep in mind to not quarrel with anyone. If anything happens, you will be put in jail. Nobody will listen to you.”

“Chi Lian, you don’t have to repeat it too often that I’m a *Yuan*. I never ever forget about it” Tien threw a lump of sticky rice which he was going to put into his mouth back to the bamboo basket before getting up suddenly. (Phanumat, 2004, p. 75)

Tien’s reaction to his sister’s words informs us about his inferiority to his own status, but he has to unwillingly accept a life of servitude. Kwui himself witnesses a Vietnamese refugee being bullied by a man believed to be a Thai soldier. The Vietnamese man is carrying a crate of fruit on his shoulder and heading to the market. Suddenly he is blocked by one of the men who come in a group of four:

“เฮ้ย หยด มึงเป็นแกวไช้ไหม” เสียงไม่เบานัก เรียกให้แม่ค้าหันไปมองเป็นตาเดียว รวมทั้งก๊วยด้วย
“ไช้” อีกฝ่ายหนึ่งตอบอย่างไม่รู้อิโนอิเหน่

“วางลังลง” ชายผมเกรียนยังตะคอก พ่อค้าชาวญวนวางลังลง สีหน้าหวาดหวั่น ไม่รู้ว่าจะเกิดอะไรขึ้น

ทันใดนั้น เจ้าของค้ำก็ตวัดมือขาดลงบนใบหน้าพ่อค้าชาวญวนอย่างแรงสองที่ซ็อน แล้วหันไปถีบลังผลไม้ให้ตะแคง ผลส้มในลังกลิ้งกระจัดกระจาย คนเห็นเหตุการณ์จ้งจ้งทำอะไรไม่ถูก แม้แต่ชายที่ถูกตบหน้าก็ยืนนิ่ง เลือดเริ่มซึมที่มุมปาก

“ไปได้ แค่นี้แหละ เฮ้อ วันไหนกูไม่ได้ตบแกวอนจนไม่หลับจริง ๆ วะ ให้ตาย” เสียงหัวเราะฟุ้งเหมือนเสียงปีศาจคำราม

“Hey guy! Stop. Are you a *Kaeo*?” The voice that called was not that soft and called attention to most vendors, including Kwui, to turn to the where the voice came from.

“Yes.” The man who was stopped answered without being aware of anything.

“Put the crate down,” another man yelled. The *Yuan* vendor put the crate down. His face looked fearful since he had no idea about what would happen to him.

Suddenly, the man who commanded strongly slapped the vendor’s face twice. Then he kicked the crate until the oranges inside spread. Those who witnessed the event were stunned. The man who was slapped also stood still, and the blood was seeping at the corner of his mouth.

“Go! That’s it. I just can’t sleep well if I don’t slap any *Kaeo*’s face.” His laughter sounded like a monster’s growl. (Phanumat, 2004, pp. 87-88)

Kwui is angry and resentful about what has happened to his compatriot who is bullied only because he is a Vietnamese. Unfortunately, he cannot do anything to help him and can just only think that if he grows up, he will fight that man back. What he saw reminds him about his sister's warning and helps him better understand about her concern. Most Vietnamese refugees feel insecure about their situation. However, many of the young men, including Kwui's three brothers, still take a risk to flee to Bangkok to make more money and send it back to help their families survive. Consequently, their father gets arrested and is interrogated about their escape. Fortunately, their father is released later because their neighborhood helps convince the police that he does not know anything about his sons' escape plan.

The situation of the Vietnamese refugees in Ban Na Chok is worse when the soldiers set up camps in the village to monitor the villagers more closely. Whoever wants to leave the village will be stopped and asked some questions before being allowed to go ahead. For Kwui, the arrival of these soldiers turns the village into a prison. The villagers have to be more careful about their movement in opening the Vietnamese school and supporting the army for national liberty. Kwui hears more bad news when his teacher gets arrested on a trip to Bangkok. This teacher teaches him and other children the Vietnamese language and history at school which is secretly open in the village. Kwui is very sad when he is unable to learn what is going to happen to his teacher.

It is obvious that the Vietnamese refugees consciously collude with the Thai government's dominant power. Despite the fact that they are aware of collusive power, they have to remain silent because they lack power to do anything. However, they demonstrate the power of resistance by challenging the Thai government's power. They know well that if they successfully escape from their village to Bangkok, they

will have freedom and a better opportunity to find a better job to support their families. Though they might have to live secretly in Bangkok, the city is too big and too crowded for them to be found easily. At the end of the story, Kwui also resists the power of domination by taking the risk to flee to Bangkok, and he finally can make it.

The Thai government's power of domination over the Vietnamese refugees impacts their socioeconomic status because without Thai citizenship they are restricted to do just some kinds of jobs which do not allow them to earn much money. Kwui's teacher says,

“คนญวนมีอาชีพให้เลือกไม่มากนักหรอก ถ้าไม่ปลูกผักเลี้ยงไก่ก็ต้องเข้าไปเป็นลูกจ้างตามร้านในเมือง เป็นเจ้าของกิจการก็ไม่ได้ เรียกว่าไอคิวต่ำไอคิวสูงก็ต้องปลูกผักกันทุกคนครั้นแหละ”

“There are no various options open to Yuan people. If they don't grow vegetables or feed chicken, they must work as a worker in the stores in town. They can't run their own business. No matter low or high IQs they have, they are supposed to grow vegetables.” (Phanumat, 2004, p. 41)

Most families in the village, including Kwui's, grow vegetables and feed pigs to earn money. Kwui's elder brothers work in the garage. The one before him helps his father take care of vegetables and pigs while Kwui is responsible for bringing up his younger brothers. Though everyone works, they do not make much from these kinds of jobs, and this is why most of them decide to go to work in Bangkok. Kwui's sister wants him to learn to be a tailor, but he does not like it. He also wants to follow his brothers to Bangkok.

This story is male dominated in terms of a larger number of male than female characters. Chi Lian, the only female member and the eldest sister, has a significant role in her family. Since her mother died when her youngest brother was six months old, Chi Lian has to take her mother's role. As the only female in the family, Chi Lian is expected to be responsible for looking after her younger brothers. Kwui's friend once asks him why he has to feed his brothers because it is a woman's task. Kwui

explains to him that he needs to help because there is only a single woman in his family. Chi Lian's grown-up brothers always consider her as complaining and annoying due to her concern with them in any issue. However, they can rely on her whenever needed. Like when their father gets sick, Kwui has to ask her to come back from her husband's house to help look after him because he feels much better to have her in the house in such a situation.

At the end of the story, Kwui is successfully safe from the police officers' inspection on his trip to Bangkok. He feels so relieved after the two officers had got off the bus he is taking. He has hope that he will have freedom in his life from now on. The story closure is open for readers to continue thinking about what will happen to Kwui in Bangkok. Will he have freedom as he hopes or will he have to experience the oppression as in his hometown again?

The analysis of two texts about the Northeastern Thais or Isan people indicates that ethnic and social class issues are not the major focus in both *Luk Isan* and *Kham Ai* despite the fact that they are prevalent in the history of this region and these issues have been persisting until now. The loss of these issues in the two books is caused by the authors' intention to tell the stories of Isan people in the way that allows the readers to better understand their way of life and culture not their oppression. However, their way of life presented in their books also reveals the truth of their economic hardship that they have to suffer. Another book in the analysis, *Kiao Bao Na Chok*, focuses more on the ethnic issues since the author aims to tell a story of the Vietnamese refugees who have to face marginalization due to their stateless status in Thai society. If compared to books about the ethnoregional and ethnic groups in Northern Thailand, the issues of ethnicity, class, and gender are less prevalent in books that portray the ethnoregional and ethnic groups in Northeastern Thailand.

In the next chapter, I analyze books that depict the ethnoregional and ethnic groups in Southern Thailand following the same analytical procedures as in the two previous chapters.

CHAPTER 6
ANALYSIS OF TEXT COLLECTION III:
BOOKS ABOUT ETHNOREGIONAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS
IN SOUTHERN THAILAND

As in Chapters 4 and 5, I draw on Foucault's theory of power as well as discourse analysis as a theoretical framework. I also draw on Botello (2004) and Botelho and Rudman (2009) theorization of the power continuum and critical discourse analysis as analytical tools to examine books that portray the ethnoregional and ethnic groups in Southern Thailand. I begin the analysis by providing the historical and sociopolitical context of the ethnoregional and ethnic groups. Then, I present the publishing practices of all texts. Next, I explore the representation of the ethnoregional and ethnic groups in each text. I apply critical multiclutural analysis to examine the power relations of ethnicity, class, and gender in the text collection. Lastly, I consider focalization, story closure, and language use in each text.

The next sections provide the analysis of a book that depicts Southern Thais, three books about Malay Muslims, one book about the Urak Lawoi and another about the Maniq people.

Southern Thailand



Figure 13. Southern Region of Thailand (Wikipedia, 2019)

Historical and Political Context of Ethnoregional and Ethnic Groups in Southern Thailand

Southern Thailand, also called Pak Tai, is on the Malay Peninsula, bounded to the north by Kra Isthmus, the east by the Gulf of Thailand, the west by the Andaman Sea, and the south by Malaysia. This region consists of 14 provinces including Chumphon, Krabi, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Narathiwat, Patthini, Phang Nga, Phatthalung, Phuket, Ranong, Satun, Songkhla, Surat Thani, Trang, and Yala. Present-day Southern Thailand was the location of several important city states like Langkasuka, P'an-p'an, and Tambralinga or Nakhon Si Thammarat, to name a few (Munro-Hay, 2001). The region has its own history and culture which is related to neighboring Islamic Malaya or Malaysia nowadays. The Siamese settled down in Nakhon Si Thammarat in the 13th century which was later established as an independent state. After the era of city state, the Thai government took a major role in the administration of this part. The rulers were appointed by the capital city. The administration system was reformed into the provinces as they are now alongside the social and cultural changes (Institute for Southern Thai Studies Thaksin University, 2019). The majority of the people in this region are Southern Thais. Southern Thailand also hosts the third biggest ethnic Malay population after Malaysia and Indonesia. Additionally, it is the house of other small ethnic groups of Malay origin like the sea nomads and the Maniq people. For the purpose of this dissertation, I present only the historical and sociopolitical context of Southern Thais, Malay Muslims, Urak Lawoi and Maniq people.

Southern Thais

Southerners are those Siamese who established in the area around the 13th century. Compared to Northerners and Northeasterners, or Isan People, the Southerners

have more in common with Central Thais. They speak Southern Thai as their major language, but their language is more similar in lexicon and grammar to Central or standard Thai. Also, they share the same eating culture as the Central Thais by eating rice as their staple food while Northerners and Northeasterners eat glutinous rice. Interestingly, the Southern Thais, in general, have better socioeconomic status than the residents of the other regions except for the Central Plain region. It is worth noting that the history of Southern Thailand does not mention the Central Thai domination over the Southerners as much as that of the Northerners and Northeasterners, or Isan people.

Malay Muslims

Malay Muslim is the term used to refer to ethnic Malays in Thailand, particularly those who live in Narathiwat, Pattani, Yala, Songkla, and Satun. This ethnic group uses the term Orang Melayu to refer to themselves. Historically, the area of the modern Thai provinces of Narathiwat, Pattani, Yala and much of the northern part of modern Malaysia was an independent Muslim city-state known as Patani until the 16th century when it became a vassal state of Siam. The kingdom had been an international trading port since the 16th century or earlier. In 1791 and 1808, there were rebellions within Patani against Bangkok rule, following which Patani was divided into seven smaller units (mueang). Bangkok renamed certain localities with Thai versions of their names and merged some of the mueangs. Phibul's policy of Thaification which aimed to assimilate the Malay Muslim people to the dominant culture of the Central Thais seriously impacted their way of life because it meant that they were forced to neglect their own identities (Nidhi. 2007). Denied recognition as a culturally separate ethnic minority, Malay Muslims reacted against the Thai government policy towards them and a nationalist movement began to grow, leading to the South Thailand insurgency

in the three southernmost provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat in 1948 and has become more complex and increasingly violent since 2001.

While Isan is known as the poorest region in Thailand, the Malay Muslims population in the three southernmost provinces, namely Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat, have the lowest income in the country (Office of the National Economic and Social Development, 2018).

Urak Lawoi People

Urak Lawoi, which means people of the sea, is the name this ethnic group uses to call themselves in their language. They sometimes refer to themselves in standard Thai as *Chao Le*, a term which also includes two other groups of sea people the Moklen and the Moken. The Urak Lawoi are thought to be ethnically Malay. These people have lived on the islands off the coastal provinces of the Andaman Sea in the Southern region of Thailand for hundreds of years. They have long been considered Thai because their settlement in the area was used to demarcate Thai territory by the British colonial administrators of Malaysia around 1910. *Thai mai* or new Thai is a term introduced by the government as an attempt to integrate the Urak Lawoi into Thai society (Supin, 2007). Before the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami disaster in 2004, the majority of Thai people hardly knew any of the *Chao Le* groups despite the fact that they had been living in Thailand for a long time. However, after the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami people began to pay more attention to the *Chao Le* community and their cultures.

Maniq People

This ethnic group is widely known in Thailand as Sakai, Semang, *Ngo*, or *Ngo-pa Sakai* while they call themselves Maniq or Mani, and dislike being called by

the other terms. Actually, Sakai and Semang are not even the same group of people even though many Thai people use these two terms interchangeably. Both terms, however, show strong disapproval since the former one means “slave” while the latter refers to “monkey.” Therefore, the way that this group of people uses the term Maniq, which means “human being,” to call themselves is their reaction against any derogatory term used to refer to them (Chit, 2001).

The Maniq people have been living in the forest of Southern Thailand in the Banthat Mountain and around the Malaysian border in the provinces of Trang, Phatthalung, and Satun for thousands of years. They have a short build, dark skin, broad noses, and curly hair. Their curly hair is the cause why they are called *Ngo* or *Ngo-pa* by many Thais. *Ngo* refers to rambutan, a hairy tropical fruit native to Southeast Asia, while *pa* means forest. The Maniq are a hunting and gathering society. They live very simple lives by building their bamboo huts with roofing made of thick leaves. They also eat food found growing wild or living in the forest. They have no knowledge of agriculture and animal husbandry. The Maniq are well recognized in Thai society as King Chulalongkorn composed a drama entitled *Ngo-pa* in 1906 telling a story about a love triangle involving a Maniq woman and two Maniq men that ends tragically. It is the first piece of Thai literature that portrays the ethnic minority and their cultural differences. Yuphon (2004) states that King Chulalongkorn’s *Ngo-pa* is proof that he paid attention to this ethnic minority which is considered humble and valueless. He seriously wanted to learn more about this group of people by fostering a Maniq boy in his court after which he wrote the drama, *Ngo-pa*. According to Thongchai (2017), the king’s drama is counted as an ethnography of the Maniq in the form of literature. However, he argues that King Chulalongkorn wrote this drama while he was sick and was bored. This suggests that this piece of literary work was not created with the intention to value the ethnic minority.

Production Practices of Text Analysis about Southern Thais

The single book included in this cluster is *Khanamnoi Klang Thungna*. I summarize the significant information about this book in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Text Collection about Southern Thais

Title	First Publication	Ethnoregional/ Ethnic Group	Main Character's Name/Gender	Point of View
<i>Khanamnoi Klang Thungna</i>	1981	Southern Thai	Den, Chop, and Bao/Male	Third-person omniscient

This book was written by Chamlong Fangchonchit and was first published in 1981. It won the award for young adult book from the National Youth Bureau³³ in 1982 and the award for pre-adolescent fiction from the National Books Development Commission in the same year. Chamlong was born in 1954 in Mueang District in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Southern Thailand. He wrote *Khanamnoi Klang Thungna* to recall his childhood memories from his rural hometown. In 2010 he was presented the Raphiphon Award for being a well-known author who creates good quality books for social development.



**Figure 14. *Khanamnoi Klang Thungna*
by Chamlong Fangchonchit**

³³ This book award no longer exists after the National Youth Bureau was integrated with the Department of Children and Youth, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security in 2015.

Representation of Southern Thais in Text Collection

The book portrays the simple life of three youths, Den, Bao, and Chop in the countryside of Nakhon Si Thammarat Province in Southern Thailand. Most of the youths' parents are depicted as valuing the importance of education and wanting their children to be formally educated as much as possible. Due to their varied socioeconomic status, however, some families can support their children very well while others cannot.

Den is depicted as a boy who has an opportunity to be educated, but declines it at first before accepting it later. He was born in a middle-class family. He is a hard-working student and has a good academic performance. But after finishing grade four, he does not want to go to school anymore. His mother, nevertheless, does not allow him to do as he wants. So, Den has to go to further his studies in grade five. He never feels happy and always asks his mother to allow him not to go because he is too tired to travel so far away from home, and he does not understand why he needs to learn some subjects which are not practical for his life. He enjoys life more in the paddy field than in the boring classroom. Den then leaves his house for school every morning, but he never reaches it. His mother, Nuan, and his teacher, Sukanda, try very hard to change his mind, but they finally have to give up. After spending time feeding the betta fish and trapping birds for a long while, Den decides to go back to school again. He gets bored with what he is doing though, and has no friends to join him since both Bao and Chop have to study hard.

Bao is completely the opposite of Den. He wants to be educated, but has fewer opportunities than his friend because of his low socioeconomic family. His parents have five children, and he is the eldest son. Due to poverty, his parents, sisters, and brothers never have enough food to eat. Bao's mother has to send him to be a temple boy so that he has enough to eat and can also share some food with his brothers and

sisters.³⁴ Bao is happy with his situation because he not only has enough food to eat but also has a chance to learn a lot from the young monk, Yut, who he serves and is his idol. Bao wants to go to school, but his parents are unable to support him. Unfortunately, his father is accused of stealing one of the villagers' water buffalo and is put in jail because his wife cannot pay the bail. Bao's family's situation gets worse after his father is in jail because his mother has to work very hard alone to support all of her children. Yut leaves the monkhood and uses his knowledge of law to help Bao's father to get out of jail.

Chop is lucky enough in that he is the only child of his parents and they have no problem supporting his studies while he himself also enjoys studying and can do well at school. Among the three youths, he has the least important role.

Exercise of Power among Characters in Text Collection

about Southern Thais

This book is told in a third-person omniscient narration. The narrator knows the feelings and thoughts of every character in the story. Through this narrative, the readers are allowed to view the story from multiple points of view.

Den seems to have a more significant role than the other two boys, Chop and Bao. He is positioned as a resister because he is the only one who questions going to school. He does not want to go to school despite the fact that he academically performs very well. For him, going to school is a waste of time and not necessary for his life. He does not understand why he has to learn subjects which he deems are not useful for his life such as fractions and English. However, he has to further his studies after finishing grade four because his mother does not allow him to drop out. Thus, he devises many ways not to reach school until his mother has to take him there herself:

³⁴ In Theravada Buddhism, monks go on a daily almsround in the morning to collect food from laypeople. The temple boys carry the alms bowls of the monks during the collection, and subsequently prepare food for monks before eating the leftovers themselves.

เด็กขายนี้นึกๆ แม่นี่ช่างไม่รู้หัวใจลูกเอาเสียเลย พยายามบังคับอยู่เรื่อย เหมือนกับครูบางคนที่เขาแต่สอนๆ บอก ว่าเรียนจบแล้วจะสบายอย่างนั้นอย่างนี้ ไร้ คนเราก็กินข้าวเหมือนกัน แหะหน้า ครูก็กินข้าว กำนันก็กินข้าว คนบ้านนอกโง่ๆ...กินข้าวมีข้าวกินเสียอย่าง ไม่เห็นมีอะไรน่ากลัว ไปเรียนหนังสือทุ่มเทเงินทองไปเปล่าๆ สู้เอาเวลานั้นทำงานเก็บเงินยังจะดีกว่าเสียอีก สิบห้าปีเก็บได้เท่าไรแล้วทำไมต้องไปนั่งเฝ้าให้คนอื่นดูค่า

The boy thought that his mother never understood him at all. She always forced him to do what she wanted. Some teachers just taught and told their students that they would have a better life after finishing school, blah, blah, blah. Alas! We all eat rice. So do the teachers. The sub-district headmaster also eats rice. The foolish country people eat rice, too. As long as we have rice to eat, we don't have to care for anything. Going to school is such a waste of money. It'd be better to work to earn money. Let's see how much we can collect if we work for 15 years. Why do we have to go to school and watch others scold us? (Chamlong, 2013, p. 31)

Though he goes back to school at the end of the story, his thoughts reflect the Thai government's power of domination that forces children to learn what might not be necessary in their lives. Also, it indicates the teachers' dominant power over the students. Some of Den's teachers consider the students who do not want to learn in the classroom as good for nothing and tend to ignore them.

Most of the characters in the story collude with the Thai government's dominant power by means of education. The three boys' parents consider education as the best way for their children to have a better life. Den's mother argues with her son when he tells her that he does not want to pursue his studies:

“ไม่ได้ แม่ไม่ยอมเด็ดขาด สมัยนี้เขาเรียนกันทั้งนั้น ดูอย่างพี่ยุทพี่ยอสิ พอเรียนจบแล้วไม่ว่าจะเป็นอะไรก็มีเงินเดือนหลงใช้ ไม่เหมือนแม่ ต้องขายข้าวสาร ขายไข่เป็ด...”

“No. I definitely won't allow you to do that. Today most people go to school. Yut and Yom are good examples. After finishing school, whatever you do will provide a salary. Don't follow me. I have to sell rice and duck eggs. (Chamlong, 2013, p. 30)

Bao's mother, Bunpha talks about educated people with her son:

“คนดีมีการศึกษาเขารู้จักคิด...” บุญพาพูดออกมาเบาๆ เป็นครั้งแรกที่บ่าวคิดว่าแม่ของเขาพูดได้ดีที่สุด เด็กชายแอบยิ้มอย่างชื่นชม เขาก็เห็นด้วยเช่นนั้นเหมือนกัน

“Those who are educated know how to think...” Bunpha spoke softly. It was the first time that Bao heard his mother says something so right. He smiled admiringly and absolutely agreed with his mother. (Chamlong, 2013, p. 159)

Bao and Chop enjoy going to school since they realize the benefits of being educated. Bao even wishes to visit Bangkok when he hears about it from Yut during his monkhood. His wish implies that he has to study more in order to provide himself with a better future. Yut himself earns a degree in law and works as a lawyer after leaving the monkhood. Poverty is the issue in this book since Bao’s family encounters socioeconomic hardship. His mother has to work very hard to look after his siblings while his father is in jail. Due to the family’s hardship, his mother sends him to stay with Yut at the temple.

Male domination can be seen in this book since all three main youth characters are males, and another important character, Yut, is also a male. However, there are a number of female characters in this story. The boys’ mothers have more significant roles than their fathers, particularly, Den’s and Bao’s mothers. Nuan, Den’s mother, has the important role of looking after her son as well as managing his education. Bunpha has a heavy burden with her children and the household expenses especially when her husband is in jail:

ลูกๆ นอนคุ้ยกันเหมือนหมู ถ่ายเทความอบอุ่นและเชื้อไข้แก่กัน สมองของบุญพานึกเห็นแต่ความยากแค้น ลูกเปลือยอกนอน หม้อแกงร้าง หมูที่เลี้ยงไว้ตัวหนึ่งผอมจนซี่โครงผุด เห็นหน้าโปนกระดูกของป้าขาว ฟันทองเต็มปาก และท่าเดินกะเผลกกะเผลก ลุงปลดอดคนใจร้ายข่มเหงคนอื่น คนพวกนี้น่าจะได้รับผลร้ายตอบสนองของความร้ายกาจดูบ้างสักที ว่าเขาจะเดือดร้อนเจ็บปวดราวเพียงใด บุญพานี้แหละจะสนองผลให้

The kids were sleeping curled up like piglets sharing warmth as well as germs. Bun Pa only thought about her family’s hardship. Her kids were sleeping shirtless. No rice was left in the pot. The only pig she had was so thin that she could see its ribs. She visualized Mrs. Khao’s bony face and gold teeth, and her limp. Also, she thought of Mr. Plot who was unkind and oppressed others. Both of them should receive something bad in return. She would make that happen. (Chamlong, 2013, p. 149)

The hardship she has to encounter as well as her desire to take revenge on those who accused her husband pushes her to plan stealing their rice. Her revenge would thus be how she would fight the accusers' dominant power. Fortunately, Yut witnesses the stealing and exhorts her not to do it.

Den's advisor, Sukanda, is another important female character. She is a young enthusiastic woman who has just graduated and is now a teacher. She considers Den's absence from school a big deal while her coworkers tell her to ignore it because they think there is no need to deal with a student who is good for nothing. However, Sukanda disagrees with them because she thinks that it is her duty to help her student. Therefore, she tries very hard to encourage Den to go to school.

The story ends happily with the scene of Den and Chop going to school together in the new semester. This closure is fixed since it leaves the readers with the assumption that schooling is very important and is a requirement for a good life. The way that Den makes the decision to go back to school again lets the readers think that it is the only way to help him succeed in life.

Production Practices of Text Collection about Malay Muslims

Books included in this cluster are *Phisuea Lae Dokmai*, *Pono Thirak*, and *Dek Pono*. I summarize the significant information about these books in Table 8 below.

Table 8. Text Collection about Malay Muslims

Title	First Publication	Ethnoregional/ Ethnic Group	Main Character's Name/Gender	Point of View
<i>Phisuea Lae Dokmai</i> (<i>Butterfly and Flowers</i>)	1978	Malay Muslim	Huyan/Male	Third-person omniscient
<i>Pono Thirak</i> (<i>Dear Pondok</i>)	1981	Malay Muslim	Hasan/Male	Third-person limited
<i>Dek Pono</i> (<i>The Pondok Students</i>)	1997	Malay Muslim	Naset/Male	Third-person limited

Phisuea Lae Dokmai is a coming-of-age young adult fiction written by Makut On-ruedi under the pen name Nipphan. It tells the story of a kind-hearted Muslim teenager in Southern Thailand who does his best to help his family survive. *Phisuea Lae Dokmai* was first published in a women's weekly magazine, *Satri San*, in 1976. Then, it was compiled and published two years later. The book won the National Book Fair Award in 1978 which is the same year that it was published. Further, it was selected as one of the hundred books that Thai children should read as well as outside reading for grade ten students. Additionally, in 1985 it was made into a film by Yutthana Mukdasanit and won a lot of awards both in the country and abroad. In 2010, it was made into a TV drama series on TV Thai Channel. Moreover, the book was translated into foreign languages including Chinese, Japanese, and English.

The author is a southerner born in Songkhla Province. He was selected as the National Artist in literature in 2012. He was inspired to write this book after learning about the life of youths who worked as rice smugglers at the border between Thailand and Malaysia. He states that at that time both rice and sugar were controlled goods. The fact that prices were higher in Malaysia than in Thailand resulted in the products being smuggled to be sold in the border towns (Nipphan, 2000). Nipphan owns a publishing house, and *Phisuea Lae Dokmai* was the first book published:

We began with Dokmai Publishing House³⁵ in 1977. The first book published was *Phisuea Lae Dokmai*. This happened because after the book was published in *Satri San*, I had no idea what should be done to have it published in book form. Thus, I decided to open my own publishing house without knowing much about this business. Then, ten thousand books were published and many of them were not sold. Fortunately, later the book was selected by the Ministry of Education to be used as outside reading in most schools (Phisuea Publishing House, 2019)

Phisuea Lae Dokmai is Nipphan's masterpiece work, and one of the most successful Thai young adult fiction books. The latest edition was published in 2009.

³⁵The publishing house is now called *Phisuea*. It aims to print affordable and high-quality books in order to motivate Thai people to read more.

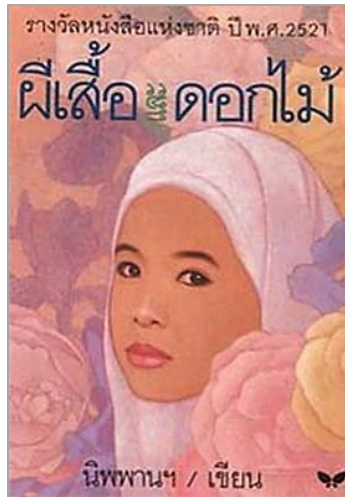


Figure 15. *Phisuea Lae Dokmai* by Nipphan

Pono Thirak tells about Muslim youths at a Pondok school in Southern Thailand. Written by Narongrit Sakdanarong, the book was first published in 1981 and won the award for best young adult novel from the National Culture Commission³⁶ in the same year. Narongrit was born in Udon Thani Province in the Northeastern region. He was a teacher under the Ministry of Education and was sent to teach at a Pondok school in Patthani Province which provided him with an opportunity to learn more about the Pondok schools and the local Malay Muslim community.

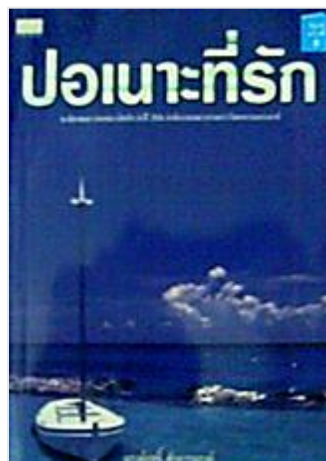


Figure 16. *Pono Thirak* by Narongrit Sakdanarong

³⁶ This literary award no longer exists after the Office of National Culture Commission integrated with the Department of Cultural Promotion in 2010.

Dek Pono is another book about the life of Muslim students in a Pondok school in Southern Thailand. It was written by Anuson Marasa and first published in 1997. The book was one of the final ten nominees for the children's book award by the Ton O Grammy Publishing House³⁷ in 1997. The latest edition was published in 1999.

Anuson was born in 1964 in Southern Thailand. He wrote this book from the perspective of an adult looking back to his childhood as a Pondok student in Pattani Province between 1981 and 1983. This book thus was written from a member of the Muslim community.

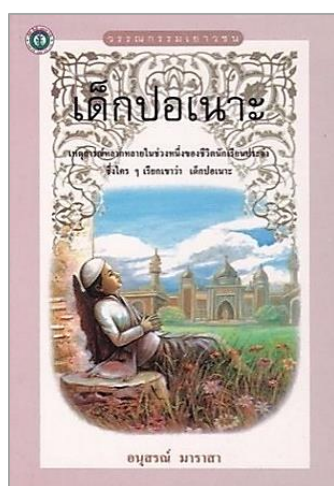


Figure 17. *Dek Pono* by Anuson Marasa

Representation of Malay Muslims in Text Collection

The Malay Muslims in *Phisuea Lae Dokmai* are depicted as those who live in poverty, and this poverty does not allow them to have many options in their lives. Poverty even forces them to take unwanted jobs, either legal or illegal, in order to survive. After wondering around with his wife and his eldest son, Huyan, who was at that time less than three years old, Puncha decided to work as a porter at the railway station. Not very long after that, he was able to save enough money to buy some scrap

³⁷ This publishing house no longer exists.

wood and zinc strips to build a small hut on the Buddhist monastery's land though there was criticism of this inappropriate decision. Puncha hoped that he could support his 13-year-old son's, education as much as possible so that he would get a good job and support his brother and sister.

Huyan did not start going to school until he was 10 years old. Every day before going to school he has to do everything his mother used to do before her death during the delivery of his sister. . When he finds out that his father earns less than before and cannot make ends meet, he realizes that he has to do something to help his family survive. He then quits the school to sell popsicles. Later, his popsicles trade slows down, not being as good as it used to be, so, Huyan decides to work as a rice smuggler. He learns from Adel how to avoid the train conductor in order not to pay the train fare and make more profit. Most rice smugglers then have to learn how to climb up the train roof or hide themselves under the train. Though Huyan knows very well that this job is illegal, risky, and dangerous, his situation forces him to choose survival, not righteousness. To make matters worse, he has to take care of his family after his father is hit by a train. As time passes, Huyan becomes more skillful in his job and saves some money. However, the turning point of his life occurs when one of his coworkers falls from the train roof and dies. As his financial situation is much better, Huyan makes the decision to quit his job and rent land to grow flowers as suggested by his friend, Mimpy.

Other Muslim boys who work as rice smugglers like Huyan are in the same boat. They have to leave their childhood fun and dreams behind in order to face the reality of life. Life in poverty might cause Muslim youth like Huyan to do wrong things to survive, but through good ambition, he finally brings himself back to a normal life as most youth should have.

The Malay Muslims in *Pono Thirak* are students and teachers at a Pondok school in Southern Thailand. They are portrayed as those who have conflict with the traditional practices at the Pondok school. Hasun is one of those who disagrees with the practices since they seriously affect him. He never wanted to study at a Pondok school, but he has no other options because his father is unable to support him to further his studies in a public school in town. As he had attended a public school before moving to study at the Pondok school, Hasun realizes the differences between the educational systems of these two types of school. He gets frustrated with the Pondok school's curriculum and strict rules. For example, he has to learn both Islamic studies including Jawi³⁸ and standard Thai. He is not allowed to speak standard Thai outside the Thai class or talk or discuss things with his female peers one to one. Hasun gets frustrated with his lack of freedom and feels very uncomfortable with his situation. He questions Malipeng, the student president, about the reasons why those practices are required. Malipeng ends up slapping him in the face.

Malipeng and Makayi are Muslim youths who have a strong faith in Islam and believe that good Muslims need to be religious. They believe that the Thai government tends to brainwash Muslim people by sending a Buddhist teacher to teach them standard Thai. As a result, they turn against learning and speaking standard Thai as well as their Buddhist teacher. Moreover, this Buddhist teacher and a new Muslim teacher try to change some traditional practices at the school which they disagree with. What they tried to do, however, was unacceptable for some conservative students, specifically Mayaki and Malipeng. These two students lead a protest by not going to classes.

³⁸ It is an Austronesian language and a Malayic/Malayan language spoken in the Malaysian state of Kelantan and the neighboring southernmost provinces of Thailand. It is the primary spoken language of Malay Muslims, often referred to in Thailand as Yawi or Jawi in Patani Malay.

Apdun Karim, a Muslim teacher who graduated from a university in Saudi Arabia, is depicted as a person who tries to compromise with the protesters by explaining to his students that they can be good Muslims and Thai citizen at the same time.

On the other hand, the story told in *Dek Pono* portrays Muslim students as well as a Pondok school in the way that is different from that in *Pono Thirak*. It focuses more on the boarding school students' lives and their friendships. Naset is a 12-year-old Muslim boy living with his family. After finishing grade six, Naset and his friends have to go their own ways. Those whose parents do not have financial issues can further their studies in a school in town, but those who were born in low-socioeconomic families have to quit school to help their parents earn a living. Naset's father is a rubber tapper and wants to send his son to study at a Pondok school to learn both standard Thai and Islamic studies. But Naset has heard that life at a Pondok school is tough because all of the students have to help themselves to survive, he would rather not go there. He would prefer to further his studies at a public school in town. After being convinced by his father, however, he decides to become a Pondok student.

At school Naset meets a lot of new friends who come from the countryside of other provinces. Most of them have to learn to survive as Pondok students. For example, they have to learn to cook their own food; they have to perform salat or pray five times every day; they have to study about Islam every afternoon. Naset is sometimes homesick, but he lives happily at the Pondok school because he and his friends help one another when they are in trouble. For instance, Naset helps take care of his friend who gets sick and has no money. One of his seniors lends one of his friends' some money when his family has not yet sent him any. The Muslim youths in this book are thus rendered as those who learn about life like most young people in general, and at the same time they also learn about being good Muslims. The Pondok school in this story has a key role as the institution that helps them learn.

Exercise of Power among Characters in Text Collection about Malay Muslims

Phisuea Lae Dokmai is told from a third-person omniscient perspective which allows the readers to know everything about the characters' thoughts and feelings. Moreover, it offers them different subject positions to view the story.

This story is quite different from the other stories about Muslim people analyzed in this study because it does not depict Muslim people in an ethnic context, but pays more attention to their socioeconomic context. The main character, Huyan, as well as his friends, is a Muslim youth whose family experiences financial hardship forcing him to work illegally and riskily as a rice smuggler to help all his family members survive. This crisis happened to these Muslim teenagers because they and their families have been neglected by the Thai government and have to survive by themselves.

In spite of his desperate need for money when roaming around to the railway station with his family, Pucha did not beg for food or money as those beggars he saw. Instead he tried his best to help his family by looking for a job, and he finally got one as a porter at the railway station:

... เขากามกรรมกรคนหนึ่งที่สถานีรถไฟถึงช่องทางทำงาน เขาได้เห็น และเกิดความคิดขึ้นมาในวันแรกที่เดียวว่า ครอบครัวของเขาจะไม่อดตาย และไม่ต้องสูญเสียเกียรติยศให้ใครไปเลย หากได้ปักหลักอยู่ที่นี่ เมียของเขาจะได้เงินสำหรับซื้อเสื้อผ้าใหม่ และลูกชายจะโตขึ้นได้เรียนหนังสือ เพราะมีงานให้ทำมากที่สถานีรถไฟ ทุกครั้งหรือเกือบจะทุกครั้งที่มีขบวนรถเข้ามาจอดเทียบ (Nipphan, 2000, p. 20)

...Punja³⁹ asked a station worker how he could make a living. Suddenly it came to him in a flash, like lightning! If he and his family settled near the station, they would neither starve to death nor lose their dignity. His wife would have some money to buy some new clothes and his son would be able to go to school. At the station, there was much work to do whenever the train stopped there (Nipphan, 2011, p. 2-3)

³⁹ In the quotations I follow the transcription of proper names by the translator in the English translation.

Puncha is a man who does not surrender to fate. He is willing to work hard as a laborer to make a living for his family. He even ignores the Muslim community's comments on his decision to build a hut on a Buddhist monastery because his family's survival was more important. Unfortunately, his income ultimately is not enough to make ends meet.

As the eldest son, Huyan realizes that he has to do something to solve his family's financial crisis because he knows very well that nobody can help them. He is thus forced to leave school to sell popsicles to earn money. He thinks,

“ทำไมเขาต้องมาเสียเวลาเดินไปโรงเรียนพร้อมกับถุงหนังสือหรือดินสอ ยางลบ และไม่บรรทัด เหมือนวันนี้ ในเมื่อพ่อของเขาและน้องอีกสองคนกำลังจะต้องตกอยู่ในภาวะอดอยาก แม้มันจะไม่มาถึงในวัน – สองวันนี้ แต่ก็สักวันหนึ่ง ทำไมเขาไม่รีบทำเสียเดี๋ยวนี้เลย” (Nipphan, 2000, p. 26)

“Why do I have to waste my time walking to school with books, pencil, ruler, and eraser in hand while my family is starving? Why don't I start working today?” (Nipphan, 2011, p. 9)

Though he is able to perform very well at school, he finally makes the decision to drop out to earn some money to send his brother and sister to school instead. It is painful for him whenever he thinks of his school time, but he really wants his siblings to be educated because education for him is the way to improve their lives and make them smart. He tells his brother and sister that,

...ถ้าหากว่าไม่อยากทำงานหนักแบบป๊ะ ก็ต้องไปโรงเรียน เรียนหนังสือให้รู้มากๆ แล้วก็ไม่มีใครเขามาโกงเราได้ อย่างเราถ้าไปขายไอติม ใครให้ตั้งค์อะไรมา เราก็ทอนถูก เราจะไม่ต้องขาดทุน...” (Nipphan, 2000, p. 73)

...if you don't want to work hard like Pa, you must go to school. Study and gain a lot of knowledge so that no one can cheat you. For example, if you sell ice cream, you know how to give change when someone gives you money. Then, you can't lose. (Nipphan, 2011, p. 59)

Although education is an important way to improve one's life, it is difficult for those who were born in low-socioeconomic families like Huyan and his siblings to have access to it. Huyan and his siblings started school later than usual because of their father's poverty.

การที่จะให้ลูกสักคนหนึ่งไปโรงเรียนนั้น อาจจะไม่ใช่ว่าเรื่องใหญ่โตอะไรสำหรับคนที่พอจะมีเงินอยู่บ้าง แต่สำหรับปุนจา ถ้าต้องการจ่ายเงินก้อนหนึ่งซึ่งก็ไม่มากมายอะไรไปกับการให้ลูกเรียนหนังสือเสียแล้ว หากวันใดเกิดมีคนใดคนหนึ่งเจ็บป่วยขึ้นมาก็คงต้องลำบากกันไปหมด นี่เองที่ได้ละเลยเรื่อยมา (Nipphan, 2000, p. 54)

For someone who has little money, sending children to school might not be the biggest concern. If he paid for his son education with the small amount he had. And if someone got sick one day, all family members would suffer. This why he kept on ignoring Dunya's studies (Nipphan, 2011, pp 38- 39)

Actually, education should be a fundamental right and be free for every child.

Although parents do not have to pay for tuition fees, they are supposed to pay for some other things like textbooks and uniforms, to name a few. Therefore, it is not easy for those parents who live in poverty to be able to afford those things. As Huyan persuades his father to send both his brother and sister to start school at the same time, the cost that his father has to pay is double. When his father becomes disabled, Huyan has to take charge of everything in the family. The situation he has to encounter confirms that he has to earn more money to ensure his family's survival. Other teenagers who work as rice smugglers are in the same situation as Huyan. They were born poor and have to help themselves to survive as well as support their families. It is obvious that Huyan, his father, and those teenage smugglers unconsciously collude with the Thai government's dominant power by remaining silent about what has happened to them. They just work hard to help their family survive and never blame the oppressive government that ignores them. They might think that it is their own responsibility to take care of themselves.

This is another book that highlights male dominance since most characters in the story are males. The only two female characters in the story are Akheruya and Mimpy. As Huyan's younger sister, Akheruya has to share some experiences with her brother. However, she is luckier than him because her brother devotes himself to the family. His brother's devotion allows her to have enough food to eat and go to school

as other children of her age. Mimpy is a female character that has a significant role since she is the one who guides Huyan's life to be the way it is. Mimpy is the only character whose physical characteristics are described:

มีมีปีอายุ 12 ปีเศษ เป็นเด็กผู้หญิงหน้าตาน่ารัก ตัดผมสั้น เธอจึงไม่มีเหาบนหัวเหมือนอย่างบางคน ผิวของเธอขาว ดวงตาออกสีน้ำตาลหน่อยๆ (Nipphan, 2000, p. 60)

“Mimpy was 12 years old. She was a cute girl. She wore short hair, so she had no lice as some other girls had. She had fair skin and brown eyes.”
(Nipphan, 2011, pp. 42-43)

Her socioeconomic status is much better than Huyan's. Her mother is a merchant traveling to and from the bordering town and the bigger towns far away from the district center. She quits school because her mother wants her to start learning the business to be a merchant like her. Mimpy never experiences the economic hardship like Huyan and other youths in her age. When she realizes Huyan's situation, she means to help him and then introduces him to the rice smugglers. However, she is also the one who eventually encourages him to quit the job to do something else.

Mimpy thus is an influential female character who shapes the main character's life:

น่าแปลก ที่เด็กผู้ชายอย่างเขาช่างไม่มีความคิดริเริ่มในทางที่ดีเสียเลย ทุกครั้งจะต้องมาจากมีมีปีเสนอ หรือจะเป็นไปได้อย่างที่นาขมาได้พูดไว้ มีมีปีเหมาะสมกับเขา เธอคงเป็นที่ปรึกษาได้เป็นอย่างดีเหมือนอย่างที่ผ่านมา ความรู้สึกที่เคยเกิดขึ้นอันซ่อนลึกอยู่ในใจจะทวีมากขึ้นหลายเท่า มันพุ่งขึ้นมาถึงที่สุดแล้วในตอนนี้เป็นไปได้ไหมว่า เขามีความรักต่อมีมีปี บางที วันพຼ່ງนี้ เขาจะพูดเรื่องนี้กับเธอ แต่ยั้งนี้ก็ไม่ออกว่า ควรเริ่มต้นอย่างไร (Nipphan, 2000, p. 260).

It was strange that a boy like him never had good ideas. They all seemed to come from Mimpy. Were they really compatible as Nakha had said? She would be a good companion. It was then that Huyan realized he was in love with her. He would tell her tomorrow but knew not where to begin. (Nipphan, 2011, p. 261)

The way that Huyan accepts that Mimpy always comes up with some good ideas for him, and that she is a good match for him emphasizes her significant role in the story. At the end of the story Mimpy suggests that Huyan rent a piece of land to grow flowers and sell them. Huyan argues that only women sell flowers, but he agrees

with her idea to grow them. This argument is the only gender role found in the book, but Mimpy's role emphasizes the female role as an influencer, and not as a follower as in most other stories.

The story closes happily when Huyan takes the decision to quit his illegal job and start a new life growing flowers as Mimpy suggested. He buys a t-shirt which has a colorful butterfly on it as a present for Mimpy. The story ends with the scene of Huyan taking a bus to meet Mimpy. He feels like he is a little butterfly flying to the beautiful flowers. The happy ending of the story leaves the readers with the assumption that Huyan will have a better life and he will have a happy couple life with Mimpy in the near future.

Pono Thirak is told from a third-person limited point of view through a single focal character, Hasun. The readers' knowledge of the story is filtered through his eyes. Through this single perspective, the readers are provided with a single subject position to view the story.

Similar to the other Pondok schools, the Pondok school in this story has to follow the Thai government's policy that requires the students to learn both Islamic studies and regular subjects taught in standard Thai. Hasun is one of those who colludes with the Thai government's power of domination, but he does not realize that he is exercising this collusive power. As he had previously gone to a public school where standard Thai is used as the medium of teaching and communicating, he is able to communicate in standard Thai much better than in Jawi or Malay. Thus, he does not understand why standard Thai is prohibited and questions this practice. But nobody can explain anything to him. For Hasun, therefore, the Pondok school demonstrates dominant power by restricting his ability to do what he was able to do while studying at a public school. Hasun also disagrees with the school's traditional

practices which prohibit male students to talk to female students. He resists this dominant power by supporting his teacher's effort to remove the partition that separates male and female students in the classroom.

Mayaki and Malipeng are representatives for those who resist the Thai government's dominant power. Mayaki disagrees with learning standard Thai at the Pondok school because he believes that the Thai government uses it as a tool to assimilate the Malay Muslims into the dominant Central Thai culture. He argues with a Buddhist teacher in a Thai class:

“ภาษาไทยไม่ใช่ภาษาของเรา ครูกำลังมอมเมาลัทธิไทยนิยม”

“มะกาयी คำพูดของเธอครูไม่เข้าใจความหมาย”

“ไม่มีวันที่ครูจะเข้าใจ ครูเป็นไทยพุทธ มาสอนภาษาไทยในปอเนาะ ใครๆ ก็รู้กันทั้งนั้น รัฐบาลส่งครู มาล้างสมองเรา”

“Thai is not our language. You're leading us astray with Thai nationalism.”

“Mayaki, I don't understand what you're talking about.”

“You'll never understand it. You're a Thai Buddhist, and come to teach standard Thai here. Most people know that the Thai government has sent you to brainwash us.” (Narongrit, 1996, p. 46)

What Mayaki says suggests that the Malay Muslims do not consider themselves Thai due to religious differences. Besides, they feel oppressed by the Central Thai domination. Mayaki also refers to the Thai history which does not provide facts about the Patani Kingdom:

“ทราบหรือเปล่าครู ทุกวันนี้เขาหาว่าเราเป็นพวกแบ่งแยกดินแดน ประวัติศาสตร์ที่บันทึกความกล้าหาญ วีรบุรุษของเราถูกเปลี่ยนแปลงให้เป็นผู้ขบถต่อประเทศชาติ ทุกอย่างล้วนแต่เป็นความเท็จ ถ้าครูไม่ได้มาดขี่ข่มเหงเรา ครูจะสอนความจริงในประวัติศาสตร์ของเราที่ถูกปกปิดมานานได้หรือไม่”

“Do you know that nowadays we have been accused of being separatist insurgents? Our brave heroes have been changed to rebels. Everything is untrue. If you didn't come here to oppress us, can you teach us the historical facts in the history that have been concealed for a long time?” (Narongrit, 1996, pp. 48-49)

Due to the Central Thai domination, the history of Thailand was written from the Central Thai perspective which conceals the truth about the Thai nationalism that

oppressed the Patani Kingdom. Moreover, the Thai history currently refers to those who resisted the oppression as criminals, rebels, or separatist insurgents. The Thai history thus has been used as a tool to promote the charisma of the Siamese King and his righteousness to preserve peace in Patani (Thongchai, 2017).

The Thai government exercises its power of domination over all the Pondok students and teachers when the Minister of Education does not arrive at the school as scheduled making everyone wait to welcome him. All of the teachers and students were very excited when they were informed about the Minister's visit to the school. All students including Mayak, Malipeng, and Hasun helped one another to clean up the school and forgetting about the conflict they have. Also, Hasun has been assigned to read a report on behalf of all students. The welcome reception has been prepared accordingly. The principal, teachers, students, and government officials from the district and the town have been waiting for a long time, but nobody has come yet and no reason for this is being given to them. Everyone is very disappointed about what has happened. The Minister of Education, as a high ranking official, represents the Thai government. The Minister's failure to appear without any reason suggests that the Thai government does not care for the Muslim people's feelings at all, and this negligence badly marginalizes them.

Male dominance is apparent in this story as most characters are males. The only single female character with an important role is Ro Ki Yao. She is Hasun's close friend who also disagrees with the Pondok traditional practices. However, she does not take any action to explicitly show her disagreement. Instead she tries to support Hasun in his to opposition to the senior's violence. She gets upset with him when he refuses to do what she expects. At the end of the story Ro Ki Yao is selected as one of 200 Muslim students to participate in a field trip to Bangkok and the Northeast region. Her trip suggests Bangkok domination and at the same time it

suggests how the Thai government excuse itself for the oppression exerted by the Minister of Education since Ro Ki Yao and other Muslim students are warmly welcomed by the Prime Minister. Also, Ro Ki Yao is the most outstanding student and is awarded the opportunity to further her studies at a Teacher College in order to come back and teach at the Pondok school after graduation. Ro Ki Yao's role thus is significant because she has the opportunity to go to college while Hasun lacks this chance due to his family's poverty.

The story ends with Hasun and Ro Ki Yao agreeing to do their duties. Hasun helps his father work in the salt field while Ro Ki Yao starts her college journey. The separate paths taken by these two friends reminds us of the parting of Nu Pho and Mo Ngepho in Mala's *Muban Apchan* where the haves and have-nots cannot walk on the same road of life. Thus, the story closure is fixed.

Dek Pono is told from a third-person limited perspective. The readers' scope of knowledge is intimately linked to Naset, the main character of the story. This type of narration thus offers the readers a single subject position to understand the story.

The Thai government exercises its dominant power over the Malay Muslim people by requiring the Pondok schools to offer not only Islamic studies, but also regular subjects as taught in normal schools across the country. By this, Pondok students are required to learn standard Thai which they learn without any resistance. This situation thus is completely different from the Pondok school in *Pono Thirak*. In *Dek Pono* the Pondok teachers and students collude with the dominant power because they benefit from the collusion. Naset is a good example when his ability to write standard Thai motivates his teacher to ask him to write an essay entitled "Patriotism" to be submitted in competitions. He then writes it by getting an idea from his senior. He is very successful when his essay wins the first prizes at the provincial and regional levels. By this, he is awarded cash and a trophy by the Minister of Interior. Additionally,

he receives a prize involving a visit to Bangkok. Consequently, Naset is praised by his teachers as someone capable of building school's reputation. The trip award to Bangkok suggests Central Thai domination. Since it is the capital city and the center of the country, Bangkok is the place where most people around the country want to visit. The award thus emphasizes the importance of Bangkok and its domination over the other provinces of the country.

Male dominance is obvious in this story since there are very few female characters, and none of them have significant roles. Every friend that Naset has before going to the Pondok school is male, and his friends at the Pondok school are all males also. Moreover, all of the teachers at the Pondok school are males. Additionally, patriarchal power relations are represented in Naset's family since it is his father who wants him to go to the Pondok school while his mother does not get involved in the decision making. Naset's father tries to convince him to see the advantages of going to the Pondok school. Though Naset does not want to study there, he finally decides to do as his father wishes:

ในความคิดของนาเสด การตอบรับปะครั้งนี้ เป็นเพราะไม่อยากดื้อดั่งตอสิ่งที่ปะปรารถนา เขายังคิด
อยู่ว่า ถ้าอยู่ปอเนาะไม่ได้ จะขอย้ายกลับเข้าโรงเรียนมัธยมในจังหวัดภายหลัง ถึงตอนนั้นปะคงไม่ว่า
อะไร

In Naset's mind, he said "yes" to his father because he did not want to oppose to his father's wish. He thought that if he could not survive at the Pondok school, he would ask to move to study at the high school in town later. At that time, his father would likely allow him to do so. (Anuson, 1999, pp. 10-11)

Most of Naset's friends also submit to their fathers' wishes when talking about the schools they are supposed to go to in order to further their studies. Patriarchal power relations thus are represented in many Muslim families.

The story ends with Naset's last day of the school holiday that marks the end of Ramadan.⁴⁰ He thinks of all the old friends he met during his home visit; two of

⁴⁰ The Islamic holy month of fasting

them no longer go to school because they have to work to earn their lives. He also thinks of his own life at school. He really does not know what his life is going to be like in future because his school journey is still very long. The closure thus encourages the readers to think about Naset's journey at the Pondok school.

Production Practices of Text Collection about Urak Lawoi People

The single book included in this cluster is *Bitakka Dao Duang Nan Rawang Nam Kap Fa*. I summarize the significant information about this book in Table 9 below.

Table 9. Text Collecton about Urak Lawoi People

Title	First Publication	Ethnoregional/ Ethnic Group	Main Character's Name/Gender	Point of View
<i>Bitakka Dao Duang Nan Rawang Nam Kap Fa</i> (<i>Bitakka: That Star between the Sea and the Sky</i>)	2004	Urak Lawoi	Bitakka/Male	First-person

Bitakka Dao Duang Nan Rawang Nam Kap Fa tells the story about an Urak Lawoi boy and his family. This book was first published in 2004 and awarded the fourth Rakluke Award⁴¹ for preadolescent fiction in 2006. The author, Kaya Klatale, was born Sukanya Sompiboon. She is currently an assistant professor at the Department of Speech Communication and Performing Arts at Chulalongkorn University. She wrote this story based on archival research about the *Chao Le* in Thailand. She also conducted observations of the *Chao Le*'s way of life as part of the study "Experimental Research Project of the Cross-Cultural Communication in Thai Society: A Case Study of Thai Mogen and Urak Lawoi" (Kaya, 2004).

⁴¹ This award was founded by a child care magazine entitled *Rakluke* in 2003, but it no longer exists.



**Figure 18. *Bitakka Dao Duang Nan Rawang Nam Kap Fa*
by Kaya Klatale**

Representation of Urak Lawoi People in Text collection

The Urak Lawoi people in *Bitakka Dao Duang Nan Rawang Nam Kap Fa* are represented by Bitakka and his community. Bitakka is an eight-year-old boy who lives with his father and Hati, his elder brother. His mother prayed to the god of star for eight years to ask for a new baby after giving birth to his brother. His mother was intent on naming the baby Bitakka, which means “star,” no matter it was a boy or a girl. Bitakka was a premature baby. His mother went into labor while she was accompanying his father on a fishing trip. Bitakka first touched seawater without seeing it since his eyes were still closed when his father washed the blood off his body into the sea. Unfortunately, his mother died after giving birth to him.

Bitakka and his Urak Lawoi community are portrayed as those who are proud of their ethnicity and traditional way of life. They consider themselves part of nature and harmonize with it. Most of them live a simple life with sea and sky and consider all sea creatures as their good friends. Tied to the sea, all Urak Lawoi children grow into skilled boatmen, divers, and fishermen. It seems like they are very happy with their lives in their own world and never seem to desire any other material possessions.

However, they have to connect their world with the outside world due to the Thai government's policy that requires all children to be formally educated. Most of the Urak Lawoi children, including Bitakka, have to go to schools situated on the mainland whether they want to or not. Attending school is a great adventure for all children since it is the first time that they have to step out of their community and meet people and things that they are not familiar with. The first day of school, however, is not a good experience for Bitakka because he is discriminated against by a classmate named Duangkaeo.

The Urak Lawoi people live a simple life based on fishing. As they live far away from the mainland, they have difficulty accessing medical health care. When someone is sick, the folk doctor is called to heal the patient before being taken to see a real doctor. However, they do not suffer from this and do not view it as a problem, but rather a way of life. Outsiders might think that they live in poverty, but actually they do not have a shortage of food. They eat seafood as their main food while people on the mainland do not have much chance to eat it due to its high price. Despite this, the Urak Lawoi people might be judged as poor when their condition is compared to a standard considered comfortable by Central Thai society.

Exercise of Power among Characters in Text Collection

about Urak Lawoi People

This is the only book out of 15 selected books which is told from a first-person narrator. Bitakka, as the main character, tells the story from the perspective of an eight-year-old boy. The readers are limited to know what this character knows and see what this character sees. This type of narration also gives the readers insight into this character's thoughts and feelings. According to the nation building policy, the Thai government tries to assimilate the Urak Lawoi into Thai society by naming them *Thai*

Mai or the new Thai. As a result, Bitakka and the other Urak Lawoi children have to go to school due to the basic mandatory education requirements for Thai children. While both Bitakka's father and brother practice collusive power by following what the Thai government requires them to do, Bitakka resists it by questioning why he needs to go to school and wear a school uniform. His father explains to him, “มันเป็นระเบียบ เขากำหนดมาอย่างนั้น เราก็ต้องทำตาม” [“It is a rule that we need to follow.”] (Kaya, 2007, p. 14). Bitakka thinks that the Thai government imposes too much on his community. However, he demonstrates the power of collusion as well when he has no other options and has to attend the school finally. As a consequence, Bitakka colludes and resists simultaneously.

On the first schoolday he nervously introduces himself, “กู...ช..ช..ชื่อบี...บี...ตั๊ก” [“My n...n...name is Bi...Bi...takka.”] (Kaya, 2004, p. 18). His classmates laugh at him, but he does not worry and continues introducing himself. Then, one of the classmates from the mainland, Duangkaeo, interrupts him and says, “เธอมาจากใต้ทะเล หรือหลังเขากันแน่ ยังแทนตัวเองว่ากู อยู่อีก” [“Do you come from under the sea or any other remote area? Why do you address yourself as *koo*?”] (Kaya, 2004, p. 18). When Mali, a teacher in the class, tells her to stop, Duangkaeo argues that, “ก็พ่อกับแม่ของหนูบอก ว่า คน ที่จะเจริญแล้วจะไม่พูดว่า มึง กู กันอีก” [“My parents told me that those who are civilized would no longer say *mueng* and *koo*.”] (Kaya, 2004, p. 18). Mali explains to her students that the term *koo* in *Chao Le* language is used in the same way as *chan* in standard Thai. It is not a rude word. The teacher tells Bitakka to use *chan* to call himself, instead of *koo* in his language, and when talking to friends he should address them as *thoe*. He is also taught to use *phom* to refer to himself when talking to his teachers (Kaya, 2004, p. 19).

In addition, he is taught to sing the Thai national anthem as most Thai children are supposed to do. Ridiculously, the word *koo* in standard Thai and in the *Chao Le* language, though both are used as a first subject pronoun like “I,” is used in standard

Thai as an informal and offensive pronoun while it is a common first-person subject pronoun in the *Chao Le* language. It is worth noticing that Bitakka uses *phom* to tell his story to the readers in the first-person point of view throughout the story while using *koo* to address himself when talking to the Urak Lawoi people. The way Bitakka uses *phom* instead of *koo* to tell his story explicitly indicates the Central Thai domination over the ethnic group.

Bitakka exercises the power of resistance again when his classmate, Duangkaeo, abuses him by teasing and saying to him, “ไอ้พวกชาวเล ตัวดำ ตัวเหม็น สกปรก” [“You’re a dark, stinky, and dirty savage.”] (Kaya, 2014, p. 19). She even calls him, “ไอ้พวกอพยพ ไม่มีที่อยู่” [“You’re a homeless immigrant.”] (Kaya, 2007, p. 20). Bitakka can no longer tolerate the insults and hits her on the face. At the same time, he also attains agency when he rescues Duangkaeo from drowning. His action changes the mainland girl’s bad attitude toward the *Chao Le* and also helps develop the relationship between the *Chao Le* and the mainland people.

Similar to most books in this study, male characters have more significant roles than female characters in this story. Among the female characters are: Bitakka’s mother, his sister-in-law, Lima, his friend, Duangkaeo, and his teacher, Mali. The first two female characters have the ideological female role by being a good wife and a good mother. Duangkaeo and Mali are the two female characters who exercise power. Duangkaeo demonstrates coercive power at first but turns to become a good friend to her Urak Lawoi friends later. Mali is a volunteer teacher from Phuket, a province in the Southern region. She is considered a member of a dominant group in the regional context, and exercises the power of collusion by teaching her students things that are based on the Thai government’s educational system. Simultaneously, she also exercises the power of resistance by trying to stop Duangkaeo’s dominance over the Urak Lawoi children, and power of agency by trying to bridge the gap between the

mainland and the Urak Lawoi people. She organizes a field trip to take her students to visit the Urak Lawoi village, which provides them an opportunity to learn more about one another.

The story ends by Bitakka telling the readers that:

ผมเป็นดวงดาวของครอบครัว ผมต้องเข้มแข็งและเป็นคนดีเพื่อให้ฮาติเบาใจ และเพื่อให้ปะกับมะ
ไม่ผิดหวังผมต้องตั้งใจเรียนให้ดี ผมต้องเป็นลูกอุรักลาไ้ย ผมจะเป็นหนึ่งเดียวกับผืนป่า ท้องทะเล
และพร้อมจะเผชิญกับความเปลี่ยนแปลงในชีวิตที่กำลังจะมาถึง

”I am a star of my family. I must be a strong, good person so that Hati will not worry about me, and my parents will not be disappointed with me. I must study hard. I must be an Urak Lawoi who integrates with the forest and the sea, and gets ready to encounter changes which are approaching in my life.” (Kaya, 2007, p. 70)

The ending thus is clearly closed by providing the readers with the ideology of what Bitakka, or the young Urak Lawoi in general, is expected to be and to encounter in the future. By this, the ending suggests that being a good student is part of being a good Urak Lawoi. More importantly, the changes which Bitakka refers to are very likely to be about the Urak Lawoi’s way of life.

Production Practices of Text Collection about Maniq People

The single book included in this cluster is *Phisuea Lae Sairung*. I summarize the significant information about this book in Table 10 below.

Table 10. Text Collection about Maniq People

Title	First Publication	Ethnoregional/ Ethnic Group	Main Character’s Name/Gender	Point of View
<i>Phisuea Lae Sairung</i> (<i>Butterfly and the Rainbow</i>)	2006	Maniq or Mani	Boe La/Male	Third-person omniscient

This book was written by Charan Phakphian under the pen name Yip Phanchan to tell a story of the Maniq, an ethnic group in Southern Thailand. His work was first published in 2006, and received the honorary mention award from the Green Globe

Institute in 2007. The author was born in a farmer's family in Trang Province in Southern Thailand. He also works as a newsreporter and an editor.

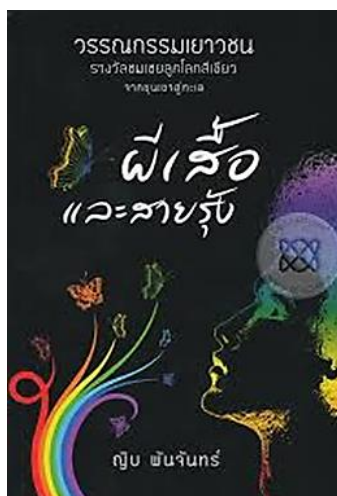


Figure 19. *Phisuea Lae Sairung* by Yip Phanchan

Representation of Maniq People in Text Collection

Most Maniq people in the story are portrayed as those who live a simple and traditional life in the forest. However, living in the forest causes them some problems. For example, they do not have identification cards and addresses and this prevents them from having access to medical care. Boe La, an 18-year-old and the last child among nine, represents a new generation of Maniq who is different from his people in terms of physical appearance and way of life. His father is a villager who decided to spend his life in the forest and marry a Maniq woman after his first wife died. Boe La has dark skin and curly hair like his Maniq mother, but his nose is prominent like that of his villager father. He has a different way of life from the Maniq community because he learns things from his father. He learns to take care of his personal hygiene like taking a bath and brushing his teeth while other Maniq people do not. His father tells him that he must be literate so that he will not be in trouble. Thus, Boe La went to school when he was offered the opportunity. He also takes the opportunity offered to him to work in town and even in Bangkok. Thus, he has a chance to see and experience

things which his people do not normally experience. At the same time, he learns how to be and live as a Maniq. He knows how to blow darts, dig for wild yams, climb trees, and so on though not quite well as other young Maniq. Boe La really wants to improve the quality of life of his people, especially their personal hygiene. Having a villager as his father benefits him because his name is included in the house registration book and he is eligible to have an identification card as a Thai citizen.

The Maniq community has been disturbed by outsiders in many ways. Some villagers take advantage of them or deceive them. Moreover, increasing encounters with villagers and town people change the Maniq people's way of life in many ways.

Exercise of Power among Characters in Text Collection about Maniq People

Phisuea Lae Sairung is told in a third-person omniscient narration which allows the readers to know anything that the author wants them to know, and does not limit their knowledge to the experience of the characters. Through this perspective, the readers are able to view the story from multiple subject positions.

Due to their ethnic identity as *Chao Pa* or forest people, the Maniq community is completely neglected by the Thai government. Most of them are not granted Thai citizenship which results in their lack of citizenship rights. They do not have identification cards or addresses like other people. They are unable to have access to basic resources like medical care. The Maniq people are more oppressed than any other ethnic group because of their physical characteristics. Their dark skin and curly hair sometimes misleads some of their compatriots to think that they are outsiders to Thai society. Boe La's teacher, Sai, who tries to encourage the Maniq children to go to school, encounters many problems when taking the Maniq children to Bangkok. He

was charged with child trafficking because the police officers thought that the children were from Ethiopia and asked to see their passports. Sai once tells about the event:

“ผมต้องแสดงหลักฐาน ต้องอธิบายว่าเป็นชนกลุ่มน้อย เป็นชาวป่าภาคใต้ ที่ยังไม่มีใครเหลียวแล
ยังนอนบนพื้นดิน จะเอาบัตรประชาชนได้ที่ไหน กว่าจะมีคนรับรอง ต้องอยู่ที่โรงพักเป็นวัน”

“I had to show the evidence. I had to explain to the officers that they’re an ethnic minority living in the forest in Southern Thailand. They are neglected. They still sleep on the ground. Where can they get an identification card?”
“I had to stay at the police station for the whole day until I could find someone to certify my claim.” (Yip, 2016, p. 155)

What happened to Sai suggests that the Thai government does not pay much attention to help the Maniq people be recognized as Thai citizens. As a result, this ethnic group is still invisible in their own country. However, Boe La’s situation is different from his ethnic people because he is the only one in the community who obtains Thai citizenship through his villager father. Thus, he has citizenship rights like any other Thai citizen. He has an identification card and can work legally. In terms of living, he is also different from others because his father teaches him to look after his personal hygiene which is not a common practice among the Maniq community. Further, his father always encourages him to realize the importance of education, and wants his son to go to school:

“เราคนอยู่ป่า ต้องอ่านหนังสือลูก”
“ถ้าอ่านหนังสือไม่ได้ มีตาก็เหมือนไม่มีตา” พ่อเคยมพูดเรื่องเรียนหนังสือบ่อยๆ
“เห็นไหม ทุกคนในทับอ่านหนังสือไม่ได้ ต้องลำบากอย่างไร”

“We, forest people, have to learn to read, son.”
“If we can’t read, it seems like we have eyes, but can’t see things.” Khiam talked about the ability to read with his son quite often.
“Can you see? Everyone here’s illiterate and they’re in trouble.” (Yip, 2016, p. 26)

As a result, Boe La is the only Maniq who has the opportunity to go to school and learn to read and write. It is clear that both Boe La and his father exercise collusive power with the Thai government because they take advantage of this collusion. His

father knows well that education is necessary for Boe La to survive in the changing world. For Boe La, education will allow him to be able to do many things that other Maniq people are not able to:

ไม่ว่าใครๆ ในป่านี้่อยากให้เขาอยู่ใกล้ วาเยะก็เช่นกัน เพราะมีปัญหาอะไร เบอละช่วยคิดช่วยแก้เสมอ เขาบวกลบเลขได้ ใช้เงินเป็น อ่านเขียนหนังสือได้ ไม่กลัวคนแปลกหน้า พูดกับชาวบ้านได้อย่างไม่เกรงกลัว แม้ชาวบ้านบางคนข่มขู่ เขาไม่ค่อยถอยหนี...

Whoever in this forest wanted him to be close to them, so did Wa Yae. This happened because he always helped them solve problems. He was able to calculate; he knew how to spend money; he was literate; and he was not afraid of strangers. He could speak to the villagers without fear and even though some of them threatened him, he never ran away. (Yip, 2016, pp. 25-26)

So, it is evident that Boe La is an outstanding Maniq, and other Maniq rely on him. Also, his knowledge of standard Thai allows him to go to work in town and Bangkok. However, he has not been completely assimilated to a civilized culture, and always questions the oppression of his community because the villagers in the area still consider the Maniq to be different from them. He finally takes the decision to come back to live in the forest permanently in order to be able to help improve the Maniq's quality of life. Therefore, Boe La is positioned as both a colluder and a resister. He colludes to become a resister and is likely to practice agency for his community in the near future.

As mentioned earlier, the Maniq people experience discrimination against their ethnicity by the name other people call them. The old man, who is the head of the group and Boe La's grandfather, explains to his father when he first came to join the Maniq community that they want to be called Maniq because they are human beings. It is acceptable for them to be called *Chao Pa*, but they reject any terms that dehumanize them. The old man's explanation suggests that the Maniq people resist the oppression against their community. Boe La himself is considered as any other

when most schoolchildren are excited and surprised to see him at school given his remarkable dark skin and curly hair. On the first day at school thus Boe La has to experience discrimination since some school children mock him as “ท่าทางเป็นบ้าใบ้ หูหนา ตาโตเหมือนไข่ห่าน” [“Being dumb, having thick ears and eyes as big as goose eggs”⁴²] (Yip, 2016, p. 84). However, he demonstrates collusive power by remaining silent and patient when confronted with the derision. Generally, the Maniq people are still considered outsiders in Thai society as Boe La’s father says, “พวกเรายังเป็นตัวตลก บ้าใบ้ ในสายตาของคนเมือง” [“We’re still the clowns and the dumb ones for the town people] (Yip, 2016, p. 97).

The power of domination is also exercised over the Maniq community by outsiders like hunters, wood cutters, and tourists. The arrival of these outsiders results in a decline in the forested area, an increased rarity of wild animals, and the drying of streams. Some villagers take advantage of them or deceive them. Moreover, increasing encounters with villagers change the Maniq people’s way of life. For example, some Maniq people imitate the sexual practice called partner swapping; they suffer from gastritis due to a change in the way they eat going from wild food to rice; eating more rice also causes them to have toothaches. Additionally, tourists come to observe their lives and even ask them to do what they want to see by offering them some money. Boe La’s teachers try to solve these problems and ask him to think about possible solutions.

The story closes with a moon night scene where Boe La is happily spending time with Wa Yae, a girl he is falling in love with. Since Boe La decides to come back and live in his community permanently intending to help improve the Maniq people’s

⁴² These are the characteristics of *Chao Ngo*, a character in the Thai folk literature, the Tale of *Sang Thong*. *Chao Ngo* is an ugly black man disguised as a handsome prince, Sang Thong.

quality of life, the closure is open for readers to question: What can Boe La do for his community? What difficulties will he encounter in his efforts to help his community? What will the future of the Maniq community be like? Can Boe La finally exercise the power of agency?

The analysis of *Khanamnoi Klang Thungna*, the single book about the Southern Thais included in this study, points out that this book does not represent the context of Southern Thailand as in the books that depict the Northern and Northeastern Thais. I did not realize that the story takes place in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province in the Southern region until I read the back cover of the book. The author does not let the readers have a sense of locality of the region as he does not use any dialects or write about the specific cultures or traditions that are available only in this region. Without the local characteristics of the Southern region, the story is almost the same as those stories which tell about rural life in general. Ethnicity, class, and gender are definitely not the main focus in the story. Among the three books that portray the Malay Muslims, only *Pono Thirak* pays attention to the ethnic conflict between the Malay Muslim and the Thai Buddhists. It also considers social class as another major issue. *Phisuea Lae Dokmai*, though, it tells a story of Malay Muslims, focuses more on their economic hardship. *Dek Pono* is similar to the two books about Isan people because it pays more attention to the Pondok students' way of life. Ethnicity is the major power relation in the other two books, *Bitakka Dao Duang Nan Rawang Nam Kap Fa* and *Phisuea Lae Sairung* while social class and gender are not the focal points.

The use of critical multicultural analysis and critical discourse analysis to examine the power relations of ethnicity, class, and gender in Thai young adult fiction about ethnorregional and ethnic groups and the characters' language use reveals a number of findings in this dissertation. These findings provide insight on how the

power relations implicated in the representation of these groups of people are. In the next chapter, I present the findings and discuss the implications that this study can have for future research, theory, teaching, and publishing.

CHAPTER 7

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

ผมจะไม่เขียนแบบร้องทุกข์ขอความเป็นธรรม หรือแบบชี้หน้าในการต่อสู้กับผู้ใดทั้งสิ้น จะเขียนเพื่อที่จะพูดกับคนชนชั้นเดียวกับผม พูดกับพี่น้องคนยากจนของผม พูดด้วยภาษาและอารมณ์ความรู้สึกของเรา ไม่เรียกร้องขอความเห็นใจจากใครทั้งสิ้น เพราะผมถือว่าคนอีสานมีชะตากรรมของตนเอง ซึ่งต้องเผชิญด้วยตัวเอง...

ในชีวิตของคนเรา อะไรจะยิ่งใหญ่ไปกว่าการกล้ากุมชะตากรรมตนเองเล่า

I will not write to call for social justice, or ever guide anyone to fight with others. I will write to speak with people in my social class...my poor people with our language and feelings without calling for sympathy from anyone. I do believe that Isan people have their own destiny which they have to control...

In our life, nothing is more important than being brave enough to control our own destiny.

(Yong, 2012, p. 284)

The purpose of this study is to examine the portrayal of ethnoregional and ethnic groups in Thai young adult realistic fiction through critical multicultural analysis and critical discourse analysis to understand how the power relations of ethnicity, class, and gender work together within the representations of these groups of people. The following research questions guide my inquiry:

1. How are particular ethnoregional and ethnic groups represented in selected Thai realistic fiction for young adults?
2. How are the power relations of ethnicity, class, and gender implicated in these representations?

Foucault's theory of power is used as the theoretical tool to understand the concept of power while critical multicultural analysis is the epistemology used to examine how the power relations of ethnicity, class, and gender are represented in the 15 Thai realistic fiction for young adults: *Luk Isan* (1976), *Hupkhao Saengtawan* (1976), *Phisuea Lae Dokmai* (1978), *Thungya Si-namngoen* (1978), *Muban Apchan*

(1980), *Dek Ban Doi* (1981), *Khanamnoi Klang Thungna* (1981), *Pono Thirak* (1981), *Luk Pa* (1982), *Kham Ai* (1988), *Dek Pono* (1999), *Mai Mae* (1998), *Bitakka: Dao Duang Nan Rawang Nam Kab Fa* (2004), *Kiao Bao Na Chok* (2004), and *Phisuea Lae Sairung*, (2006). In addition, discourse analysis is employed as the approach to analyze the characters' language use while critical discourse analysis is used as the analytical tool to examine the role of language in social processes among the characters.

According to Foucault, power is everywhere and it is exercised within discourses. Who exercises power and how it is exerted seem to be the most important questions that Foucault asks, and this needs to be considered. The analysis in this study tries to resolve these two questions as well as correspond to the research questions above.

In the sections that follow, I present the overview of findings that emerged from my analysis. Then, I provide findings as products of critical multicultural analysis of the text collection. I begin with findings about representation practices of ethnoregional and ethnic groups in the text collection. After that, I present findings about focalization and story closure, and the exercise of power which yields the following thematic findings: Central Thai domination, domination in schooling, zero sum power, a matter of class, male dominance and patriarchy, maintenance of oppression, challenges to oppressive practices, and scarcity of agency. I complete the chapter with a discussion about some implications of this study.

Overview of Findings

The study reveals that there is only a small number of Thai young adult fiction books that depict the ethnoregional and ethnic groups. The majority of the books, 11 out of 15, were published before 2000 while the most recent one was produced in 2006.

Regarding books about ethnoregional groups, there is a dearth of books that depict Southern young adults in the regional context. Those books which are available, though, they take place in the Southern region, tell more about the rural life of young people in general. *Khanamnoi Klang Thungna* by Chamlong Fangchonchit is an example of such a book. However, I decided to include it in this study in order to differentiate the depiction of Southerners in this book from books about other groups. It is worth mentioning that though there are several different groups of mountain people living in Thailand, only the stories of large groups like the Karen and Hmong were presented. Additionally, books that portray the Malay Muslims outnumber those of any other ethnic group.

All books that portray ethnoregional groups were written by insider authors while only a single book about the Malay Muslims was created by an insider author. It is evident that some outsider authors immersed themselves in the culture they wrote about. Mala is a Northerner, but he wrote books about the Karen people based on his wide-ranging teaching experiences in their community. Similar to Mala, Phibunsak is also a Northerner and worked as a teacher in the Tai Yai village for a period of time. Narongrit is originally from the Northeastern or Isan region, but he taught at a Pondok school in the Pattani Province for several years. For those who did not have such firsthand experiences, they might have carried out research either systematically or unsystematically about the ethnic groups they wrote about. Kaya, for example, wrote a story about the Urak Lawoi people based on the research conducted on this ethnic group. Nipphan is a Southerner whose hometown is not far from the Muslim community and he had the opportunity to learn about the life of teenage rice smugglers in the southernmost provinces of Thailand. Phanumat and Yip are also outsider authors who wrote about ethnic groups whose cultures they never personally experienced. However,

it is assumed that both of these authors must have been engaged in either systematic or unsystematic research to learn about the ethnic communities they represent.

At this point, I would like to point out that no matter whether the books were written by insider or outsider authors, the inauthenticity of cultural representation does exist in all the books. Despite the fact that the ethnoregional and ethnic groups speak different version of their languages in their daily lives, their stories were written in standard Thai. The authors of some books imbedded a number of words or statements in the ethnoregional and ethnic groups' languages in the dialogues between characters, but the entire books were written in standard Thai. This point makes it clear that cultural authenticity, especially in terms of language, is impossible when standard Thai is the dominant language of the country. Or it might be possible if the authors do not pay much attention to book sales.

Last but not least, male authors dominate young adult's books about ethnoregional and ethnic groups in Thailand since most of the selected books in this study, with the exception of *Kiao Bao Na Chok* and *Mai Mae*, were written by male authors. In the following sections, I will discuss the findings of critical multicultural analysis of the text collection.

Findings of Critical Multicultural Analysis of Text Collection

Critical multicultural analysis pays attention to the focalization of the story, social processes among the characters, language use, closure of the story, images, genre (s), and historical and sociopolitical context of the story. I begin with the findings concerning the ethnoregional and ethnic group representation in the text collection, focalization of the story and story closure. After that, I discuss the thematic findings of the exercise of power among the characters. Since the characters' language use plays a significant part in deploying discourses, it will be discussed alongside the social processes among the characters.

Ethnoregional and Ethnic Groups Representation in Text Collection

All of the selected books in the study portray ethnoregional and ethnic groups that have something in common. Most of them are depicted as those who have a marginalized status. They live in rural areas which distances them from town centers. They also live very far away from the center of power, Bangkok in particular. This distance seems to be a metaphor for their socioeconomic standing in Thailand since it limits their access to the fundamental rights, resources, and services provided to state citizens. Some ethnic groups are even more oppressed than others like the stateless Vietnamese refugees in *Kiao Bao Na Chok* or the Maniq people in *Phisuea Lae Sairung*.

Moreover, most of them suffer economic hardship which impacts many aspects of their lives. Though poverty is not presented as an issue in some books, the readers can acknowledge the existence of this issue from the people's way of life portrayed in the books. The have-nots encounter serious problems like starvation and lack of opportunity to have access to education and medical care. Some youth characters like Kham Ai and Huyan are unable to further their studies at a higher level, and other young people like Yachi, Hasun, and Naset have to drop out of school because their families cannot support them. The young character Mo Ngepho does not even have the opportunity to go to school due to the responsibilities he must bear for his siblings after his mother's death. More importantly, what happened to young characters like Nu Pho and Mo-Ngepho in *Muban Apchan*, Mueang Kham, Yachi, and Su Tho in *Luk Pa*, clearly demonstrates that class matters as it further marginalizes underrepresented communities.

The portrayal of ethnic groups like the Karen people in Mala's books, however, represents how most Thai people perceive them. Actually, it is not just the perception

of the Karen but also the mountain people in general. Most Thai people think that mountain people, no matter what their specific groups, are poor, uneducated, unhygienic, and uncivilized. Mala's books, on the one hand, outline the Karen's sociopolitical problems; on the other hand, they also stereotype the Karen community and do not let us learn about how they exercise their agency to develop their own group and improve their quality of life.

Patriarchy is very obvious in all the books about ethnoregional and ethnic groups. Most main characters are males. Mai Mae is the only female central character in a book written by a female author. Though La Bun is another female main character in a book by Phibunsak, she has a less significant role than her male teacher, Macha. Additionally, the majority of the supporting characters are males. In most books, fathers almost always have more important roles than mothers and also play more influential roles in guiding their children's lives. In some books, fathers raise their children alone because their mothers passed away.

How the ethnoregional and ethnic groups are represented in Thai young adult fiction is imperative because these representations allow the young Thai readers to better understand the marginalized groups in Thai society. The understanding of these representations alone, however, is insufficient to help the young readers critically engage with the texts. The understanding of how the power relations of ethnicity, class, and gender are implicated in these representations through critical multicultural and critical discourse analyses provides young readers with tools to critically think about how Thai society is sociopolitically organized. In the next sections I write about the findings of critical multicultural analysis of the text collection.

Focalization and Story Closure

Most stories are told in third-person narration. *Luk Pa*, *Muban Apchan*, *Khanamnoi Klang Thungna*, *Phisuea Lae Dokmai*, and *Phisuea Lae Sairung* are told from omniscient narrators while *Dek Ban Doi*, *Luk Isan*, *Kham Ai*, *Mai Mae*, *Kiao Bao Na Chok*, *Pono Thirak*, and *Dek Pono* are narrated from a limited point of view through the main characters of the story. *Thungya Si-namngoen* and *Hupkhao Saengtawan* are told from limited perspectives through both the young characters and the adult characters in the story. *Bitakka Dao Duang Nan Rawang Nam Kap Fa* is the only book in the text collection that is told from the first-person point of view of the main character in the story.

First-person and third-person limited points of view provide the readers with a single subject position because they view the story only from the young characters' perspectives and thus identify with them. It might even be easier for the young readers to identify with the young characters of their own ages. Books that are told from a single perspective and offer a single subject position, therefore, limit the readers' power position to view the story from just one side. Consequently, it also limits their worldview or ways of being and understanding the world. The way that a third-person limited perspective is used to tell the stories in both *Thungya Si-namngoen* and *Hupkhao Saengtawan* through the adult characters, apart from the young characters, provides the author with an opportunity to criticize the Thai government by commenting the educational system and medical care services which might be complicated issues if told from a young character's perspective.

A third-person omniscient point of view, on the other hand, provides the readers with a more powerful position to view the story since multiple subject positions allow them to learn more from multiple characters and do not limit them to identify

themselves with only a single character in the story. As a result, the readers are offered multiple ways to view and understand the world. The author of *Muban Apchan* also criticizes the government through the doctor's and monk's perspectives.

The closure of *Muban Apchan*, *Mai Mae*, *Hupkhao Saengtawan*, *Luk Isan*, *Khanamnoi Klang Thungna*, *Phisuea Lae Dokmai*, *Pono Thirak*, and *Bitakka Dao Duang Nan Rawang Nam Kap Fa* are fixed which provides the readers with a sense of completeness and does not challenge them to construct alternative endings. The ending of *Thungya Si-namngoen*, *Dek Ban Doi*, *Luk Pa*, *Kham Ai*, *Kiao Bao Na Chok*, *Dek Pono*, and *Phisuea Lae Sairung* are open which invite readers to question the significance of the story. These literary moves for closing a story have implications for how readers critically engage with power in the texts.

Exercise of Power

How the power relations of ethnicity, class, and gender are implicated in the representation of ethnoregional and ethnic groups in the text collection of 15 Thai young adult fiction in this study can be considered by examining how each character exercises power along the continuum from domination and collusion to resistance and agency. The following thematic findings have emerged from my analysis:

Central Thai Domination

As stated by Foucault, not all discourses have the social power and authority, and the institution is the most powerful discourse in our society (Weedon, 1997). The institution, or the Thai government, which centralizes its authority in Bangkok, exercises dominant power in most books by means of the educational system and national curriculum that require all children to go to school where standard Thai is used as the language of instruction. This requirement is also applied in most Pondok

schools where Islamic studies are provided to Malay Muslim students in Yawi and regular subjects are taught in standard Thai. Additionally, the textbooks were not only written in standard Thai, but they also include content which focuses more on the dominant culture. By this, the Thai government unconsciously exercises institutional power as an authority that has been accepted as legitimate.

The system, on the one hand, might provide young marginalized people with an equal opportunity to have access to education as those dominant youths; on the other hand, it is used by the Thai government as a tool for nation building and promotion of dominant cultural values. Renan (1990) states that some countries in South America, the United States, England, and Spain have tried to form single nations by demanding people to speak the same language, but they have failed to do so. Conversely, the will of Switzerland is united despite the fact that its population speaks four different languages. He thus argues that “[A] nation is a soul, a spiritual principle” (p. 19). In order to form a single nation, it is imperative that people possess a rich legacy of memories and desire to live together. Thailand is in the same situation as those countries since the Thai government demands that the people, whatever their native languages is, speak standard Thai and need to learn it at school. The Thai government’s dominant power by means of the educational system is very powerful as it is demonstrated in most of the selected books and supported by most parents in the stories as they think that going to school and learning standard Thai is the only way out of exploitation.

Further, the Thai government practices dominant power by neglecting the ethnoregional and ethnic groups making them live a life of hardship. Due to the government policy to develop Bangkok and nearby provinces, the ethnoregional and ethnic groups who live in the remote areas have been neglected and must face difficulty by themselves. As a result, these rural people have to help themselves to survive

because they cannot rely on the government to help them. It is obvious that most ethnoregional and ethnic groups in the 15 selected books have low socioeconomic status. Some groups of people in some books even live in poverty.

Moreover, the Thai government exercises the power of domination by changing the villagers' way of life pushing them toward materialism as can be seen in *Dek Ban Doi*. The government also denies citizenship to some ethnic groups like the Vietnamese refugees and Maniq people whose families have lived in Thailand for generations. The Thai government's dominant power is also exercised by those government officials like the police officers in *Kham Ai*, the local government official in *Dek Ban Doi*, and the Minister of Education in *Pono Thirak*.

The Thai government domination over its people in most books signifies the power structure that characters can interrupt, deconstruct, and reconstruct in the micromoments of the stories. Readers can also disturb this power structure with their reading by rethinking what characters say, do not say, do, do not do, think, or feel.

In some books like *Mai Mae*, and *Hupkhao Saengtawan*, the Bangkok people unconsciously practice the power of domination over the ethnoregional and ethnic groups by providing them with the opportunity to live a better life. Dome and Macha are the adult characters who have key roles in supporting the ethnic children like the Hmong and Tai Yai to be educated. Interestingly, some books in the text collection present Bangkok as a destination where young characters like Khui can get a better job and enjoy more freedom in life, and as a place for Bao La to gain more experience outside his forest dwelling. In addition, some books portray Bangkok as the place where marginalized people like La Bun and Ro Ki Yao should be provided with an opportunity to visit. And for a youth like Bao, Bangkok is an ideal place that he would like to go to.

Domination in Schooling

Despite the fact that the Thai government wields its dominant power over the ethnoregional and ethnic groups by means of education and standard Thai, schooling also demonstrates dominant power over their students through teachers. Teachers' domination is obvious in Pibunsak's two books.

In *Thungya Si-namngoen*, the principal calls the Karen students *Yang* and also makes them look like fools by playing a trick on them. Moreover, he demonstrates dominant power over Mawi by whipping him as a form of punishment. Actually, the principal is supposed to play a leading role against racism and help students learn to respect other people, but the way he treats the Karen students and derogatorily calls them *Yang* indicates that he is a racist and does not embrace diversity. The way he treats Mawi suggests that he has the authority to do it as principal. Thai schooling's exercise of dominant power over students can also be seen from the school rules that do not allow ethnic students to speak their native languages, and that require them to have their hair cut, wear school uniforms, and the like. These rules are the institutional power that Thai schools are provided with to exercise over students.

In *Hupkhao Saengtawan*, teachers abuse their power by yelling at the students, hitting the blackboard with a stick, and beating the students on the head as a form of punishment. These punishments almost always occur in the traditional Thai classrooms where teachers are centered. It is not only the Thai schools exercise dominant power over their students, the Pondok schools in the Southern region also demonstrate this power position by prohibiting male students to talk to female students. This dominant power is exercised based on the assumption that it is accepted by the Muslim community.

Zero Sum Power

The dominant power, which is mostly exercised by a dominant group over the non-dominant group, suggests that there is a zero sum power (Guinier & Torres, 2002). Although the Central Thai domination over other ethnoregional and ethnic groups is evident, the analysis in this study also shows that a non-dominant group in one context can switch and become a dominant group in another context. The ethnoregional groups in the selected books are marginalized and considered non-dominant groups in the national context, but they turn out to be dominant groups in the regional context. What has happened is that when they become a dominant group, they also practice dominant power over the others.

Isan people in *Luk Isan* are considered a non-dominant group in Thai society, but they are the dominant group in Northeastern Thailand while the Chinese and Vietnamese are the ethnic minority groups in the region. Based on this context, Khun's father becomes a member of the dominant group in the Isan community, and practices the power of domination over the Vietnamese. The Chinese are larger than the Vietnamese in terms of numbers and so they demonstrate dominant power over the Vietnamese. In *Mubhan Apchan*, *Luk pa*, and *Thungya Si-namngoen* the lowland people or the Northerners also practice dominant power over the Karen people. The mainland people or the Southerners in *Bitakka Dao Duang Nan Rawang Nam Kap Fa* exercise coercive power over the Urak Lawoi community.

One of the most obvious ways that most dominant groups exercise power over non-dominant groups is through the use of derogatory exonyms to call those who do not belong to their cultural group. Isan people call the Vietnamese *Kaeo*. The Northerners refer to the Karen as *Yang*. Most people in Thailand call the Maniq using the terms

Sakai or *Ngopa*. These are good examples of dominant discourses that the dominant group share within their cultural group.

In addition, the physical characteristics, especially skin tone, is another issue that most dominant groups use to differentiate those in non-dominant groups from their own groups. Duangkaeo, a girl from the mainland in *Bitakka: Dao Duang Nan Rawang Nam Kap Fa*, teases *Bitakka*, the Urak Lawoi boy as being dark, stinky, and dirty savage. The schoolchildren in *Phisuea Lae Sairung* mock Boe La due to his dark skin and curly hair, on his first day of school. Also, the police officers in the same story mistake the Maniq people for the Ethiopian because of their dark skin color.

Kham Ai's parents and relatives tease him as an ugly boy due to his protruding ears. Though nobody says anything about his skin color, it is assumed that he has dark brown skin as most Isan people do. This assumption is not based only on the physical characteristics of the people in this region in general, but also from the narration of the principal's family. The first principal of the first school founded in Kham Ai's village brings his family to live with him in the village. One of his daughters is described as:

“มีหน้าตาน่ารัก นิสัยร่าเริง เข้ากับเพื่อนใหม่ได้อย่างรวดเร็ว มีผิวพรรณสะอาดใสอาน ผิดจากลูกชาวบ้านโดยทั่วไป”

“a pretty joyful girl who can get along with her new friends very quickly. Her clear skin makes her look different from most village children” (Yong, 2012, p. 192)

Although the narrator does not say explicitly about the girl's skin tone, it can be assumed that her skin color is lighter than that of those village children including Kham Ai. In fact, the girl is also different from most village children in terms of her socioeconomic and social status as her father is a principal who works for the government. The mention of the principal's daughter's complexion even emphasizes

Kham Ai's and most village children's oppression. A comment on skin tone can also be found in *Phisuea Lae Dokmai*. Mimpy is the only female character whose physical features are described as a pretty, fair skinned girl. This description is significant because it values the fair skin color. Kham Ai's and Mimpy's cases, though, do not explicitly involve colorism, they give the sense of superiority of light skinned color.

The use of derogatory exonyms and the verbal bullying based on skin tone thus show how the dominant groups construct the identity of otherness to the groups that have less political power. These are good examples of how ethnicity and race entangle in the Thai context. It is obvious that Thai people are more diverse in terms of ethnicity. Most ethnoregional and ethnic groups are not much different in terms of physical characteristics. As a result, it can be difficult to distinguish different groups of people based on their physical features. For example, Mawi is, in fact, a Tai Yuan boy, but he is almost always identified as a Karen boy when being among his Karen friends. Some ethnic groups like the Urak Lawoi and Maniq people have some unique physical qualities which distinguish them from other ethnic groups. The way Mawi and his Karen friends are verbally bullied due to their ethnicity and the way Bitakka and Boe La are discriminated against because of their skin tone make it clear that they are the victims of two different forms of racism. The former group experiences racism based on ethnic differences while the latter is discriminated against their physical characteristics.

Zero sum power not only exists between different groups like those dominant and marginalized groups, but it also occurs within intragroups when members from a same group discriminate against others, particularly, those with lower socioeconomic status than themselves. This internalized oppression occurs within the Karen

community in *Luk Pa* when Su Tho rejects his own cultural identity as a Karen and tries to bully Yachi, who is also a Karen like himself.

A Matter of Class

Apart from the zero sum power that exists between and within the ethnoregional and ethnic groups as mentioned earlier, class is another significant factor which is implicated in power relations. It is very obvious that most ethnoregional and ethnic groups in most of the selected books have low socioeconomic status or even live in hardship. However, two of the 15 books do not depict those groups of people as having to encounter difficulty or financial issues. Mawi's and Mai Mae's never talk about their families' economic hardship, and their parents can support them to go to school without any difficulties if compared to the parents in the other stories. It is worth mentioning that the ethnoregional and ethnic people might be marginalized due to their ethnicity, but those who have higher socioeconomic status than the others within their groups are less marginalized.

What happens to Yachi, Mueangkham, and Su Tho in *Luk Pa* and the situation of the two Karen friends, Nu Pho and Mo Ngepho, in *Muban Apchan* demonstrates very well why class matters. The young characters like Yachi and Mo Ngepho have less access to formal education because of their economic hardship. In addition, the young characters like Kham Ai, Huyan, Hasan, and Naset have to drop out of school because their parents are unable to support them. The boys who come from the low socioeconomic families like Bao and Boe La can go to school because they are provided with the opportunity by other people.

Male Dominance and Patriarchy

There is an imbalance of male and female characters in the selected books. Male characters outnumber female characters in most books. In some books there are

a few female characters but they have very small roles. As husbands, most male characters practice coercive power over their wives by leading the family and reducing the wives' roles to just followers as can be seen in *Luk Isan*, *Muban Apchan*, *Mai Mae*, and *Phisuea Lae Sairung*. As fathers, most men exercise the power of domination over their children by controlling their lives, specifically their education, as can be seen in *Luk Isan*, *Kham Ai*, *Luk Pa*, *Thungya Si-namngoen*, *Muban Apchan*, *Pono Thirak*, *Dek Pono*, *Mai Mae*, and *Phisuea Lae Sairung*.

While the roles of husband and father were created as active characters, the role of wife and mother were made to be passive characters that are not enthusiastic to take part in decision making or help solve their children's problems. For example, Kham Ai's mother does nothing to make her son's wish to go to school come true despite the fact that she rather disagrees with her husband's decision to ask him to enter monkhood. While most husbands and fathers exercise dominant power over their wives and children, wives and mothers are more likely to collude with their husbands' coercive power.

Maintenance of Power Structures

Despite the fact that most ethnoregional and ethnic groups are neglected by the Thai government and so live lives of hardship, most of them collude with this dominant power by remaining silent. They do not complain or blame the government for neglecting them, but accept their living conditions and help themselves to survive. This collusion might occur because most of these people think that they have to control their own destiny as reflected by Yong, the Isan author of *Kham Ai*.

Both male and female characters exercise collusive power for several different reasons. Most fathers in the selected books including *Thungya Si-namngoen*, *Luk Pa*, *Muban Apchan*, *Luk Isan*, *Kham Ai*, *Phisuea Lae Dokmai*, *Pono Thirak*, *Dek Pono*,

and *Phisuea Lae Sairung* practice collusive power with the Thai government's educational system because they believe that education can give their children better futures. These fathers might consciously or unconsciously collude with this dominant power. Some of them might collude without noticing the Thai government's oppressive practices; they just think of education as advantageous and life changing. Some might be aware of the oppression, however, they have to collude because they do not have many options. Since most fathers experience hardship due to their low socioeconomic status, most fathers thus do not want to see their children endure poverty like themselves. The fathers of the Karen and Maniq children even think that the knowledge of standard Thai will allow their children to survive in the dominant culture.

Young characters like Khun, Kham Ai, Muangkham, Yachi, Nu Pho, Hasan, Naset, and Boe La exercise the power of collusion to support their fathers. However, the power continuum is fluid since a person can move along from one power position to another. Some young characters collude with their fathers' dominant power, but they also exercise power of resistance or even enact agency at the same time. Some characters might not have yet taken any action, but might practice agency in the near future.

Some mothers are also positioned as colluders. Khun's mother practices collusive power by remaining silent to her husband's dominant power while Mongkhon's mothers chooses to keep quiet as the answer to her son's question about why commoners always have to lose to the authorities. Her silence is her collusion with the dominant power. Both of these female characters collude because they lack power to do anything. Mo Ngepho's mother colludes with her Karen tradition because she may not realize the fact that her silence is the power of collusion. Mai Mae's father disagrees with her idea to further her studies at a higher level, not because he resists the educational system, but because he does not think that it would be to her

advantage. On the contrary, Mai Mae wants to further her studies because she views education as a way to gain knowledge and make her smart. She is also a colluder.

It is evident that the Karen people in all three books and the Vietnamese refugees collude with the power of domination by accepting their given position of inferiority. Even though they see the oppression, they remain silent because they lack the power to do anything or make any changes. The young Karen people in *Muban Apchan* collude to support the dominant force. When collusion is a way of survival, the Karen people in the same book have internalized these power dynamics by letting the dominant group take advantage of them. The Malay Muslims like Huyan and his father as well as his teenage smuggler friends collude with the Thai government's power of domination by accepting their oppression without questioning it. Hasun unconsciously exercises the power of collusion with the Thai government's educational system because he does not realize the power of domination.

Challenge to Oppressive Practices

Some young characters like Khun, Mawi, Mo Ngepho, Mongkhon, Den, Bitakka, Khui, and Mai Mae exercise resistive power. However, some of these characters like Khun colludes and resists his father's dominant power over the Vietnamese at the same time. Both Mawi and Bitakka resist and collude with the Thai government's educational system and their fathers by questioning going to school, but they finally do what their fathers want them to do. Nevertheless, Mawi resists again by making the decision to drop out of school. The two boys, Mawi and Bitakka, also resist oppression by resorting to violence. When his Karen friends are being discriminated against, Mawi fights for them. Bitakka uses force to stop his classmate's verbal bullying. Den is another character who resists the Thai government and his mother's dominant power by dropping out of school, but he colludes by coming back to study later. Mai Mae

resists her father's dominant power by questioning him about gender equity. Khui and his brothers resist the discrimination against them by fleeing to Bangkok. Mongkhon questions the educational system and the Thai government domination to change the villagers' way of life while Mo Ngepho reacts to the old generation's concerns related to the extinction of the Karen.

The other ethnoregional and ethnic characters who exercise resistive power are: the old Kasawa who is concerned about the Karen, Mongkhon's grandmother who identifies herself as Khon Mueang, Khammuang's father who resists the discrimination against the Karen, and Kham Ai's mother who argues with her husband's domination. The two female teachers, Mali and Naengnoi, resist the dominant power by trying to stop discrimination among her students. Moreover, the male and female characters from the dominant culture, Bangkok in particular, also exercise resistive power; the monk and the doctor question Thai bureaucracy; Macha uses the Tai Yai students' linguistic repertoire as a resource to learn in the classroom; and Dome and his friends disagree with gender stereotypes.

Scarcity of Agency

The power of agency is very rare in most selected books. It is exercised by only a female and male youth characters from the non-dominant groups. The other characters who practice the power of agency are a female character from an ethnoregional group and two male characters from Bangkok. The Hmong girl, Mai Mae, demonstrates the power of agency by helping the Hmong children in her community learn to read and write though she is just a little girl and finishes only grade six. However, Mai Mae's practice of agency is supported by two male characters: her father and Dome, a young man from Bangkok. Both Mai Mae and Dome perform actions to benefit the Hmong community. Bitakka is another youth

character who practices agency by improving the relationship between the *Chao Le* and the mainland people.

Mali, the female character in *Bitakka Dao Duang Nan Rawang Nam Kap Fa*, uses her privilege as a teacher to build a better relationship between the mainland and the Urak Lawoi students. What she does not only benefits her students, but also helps connect the mainland and the Urak Lawoi communities together. Another male character, Macha, also demonstrates the power of agency in the Karen community by taking action to help the Red Karen community. He takes part in saving the head of the Red Karen village when policemen ignore his disappearance. Additionally, he makes the effort to contact the district office to build a school in the Red Karen village so that the children can have access to formal education.

The rarity of this position of power might be because a person or a group of people who exercise it need to take action to end oppressive practices. It thus is more complicated than practicing resistive power which involves questioning the oppressive practices. However, it is obvious that exercising resistance alone without taking action cannot bring any changes to society. Thus, power of agency is needed to make a better world.

Critical examination of the characters' language use and its role in social processes among them reveals some interesting findings about the way the dominant and non-dominant groups use language to talk to or about others. Drawing on Gee's (2011) doing and not just saying tool, those characters who exercise dominant power over the non-dominant groups use language to exclude them from their social groups which Gee (2015) refers to as big D Discourse. Those characters who derogatorily call ethnic groups want them to be recognized as others or outsiders, and unwelcome in their Discourses.

For those ethnic groups who are being referred to by derogatory terms, they might discuss this issue in their own Discourses stating that they are unhappy to be called that way. However, those ethnic characters collude with the dominant power by accepting to be called by those offensive names. Interestingly, some of them even use those terms to call themselves or refer to their own groups when talking to the dominant groups. Their use of language in this way suggests that they consciously collude with dominant power despite the fact that they are able to exercise resistance.

My analysis of the characters' exercise of power along the continuum from domination and collusion to resistance and agency in the 15 selected books about ethnoregional and ethnic groups is a microcosm in which Thai society is reflected. The Central Thai dominate the other three ethnoregional groups while these three ethnoregional groups dominate the other ethnic minorities in the country. Among the groups of people who are dominated, those who experience socioeconomic oppression are even more oppressed. Male dominance and patriarchy are prevalent in all cultural groups. Critical multicultural analysis thus gives me an insight into how Thailand is sociopolitically organized.

In the following section, I discuss the implications of this study for future research, theory, teaching, and publishing.

Implications

For the purpose of this study, critical multicultural analysis is applied as an analytical tool to analyze the power relations of ethnicity, class, and gender in Thai young adult realistic fiction about ethnoregional and ethnic groups. Also, this analytical tool is a literary study for social change as well as a framework for teaching literature and constructing curriculums that call attention to the issues of diversity and social justice in children's literature (Botelho & Rudman, 2009). I therefore strongly

urge Thai scholars, classroom teachers, and teacher educators in the field of children's and young adult literature to pay close attention to those power relations and how they are represented in books written for young readers. In order to put this analytical tool into action, I discuss how critical multicultural analysis can be applied for future research and classroom teaching. Moreover, I present implications for theories that guide my understanding of some major concepts in this study. Also, I include publishing implications for the people involved in producing texts to consider.

Implications for Future Research

My literature review indicates that most of the research studies on children's and young adult literature in Thailand tend to consider texts in isolation from their context. Though some studies examine the texts using a sociological approach, none of them consider the power relations of ethnicity, class, and gender in their analyses. In this study, I apply critical multicultural analysis to challenge decontextualized literary studies as well as the sociological approach that overlooks the power relations of ethnicity, class, and gender in Thai society.

My critical multicultural examination of the primary texts against the research literature demonstrates that decontextualized literary study as well as sociological approach without an examination of the exercise of power, is insufficient for understanding children's and young adult literature as cultural products and how societies are organized. Thus, I highly expect that my study will have the potential to inspire shifts in literary study practices in Thailand. I then recommend the use of critical multicultural analysis as an analytical tool for research projects on children's and young adult books in any genre that portray social diversity issues such as ability, sexuality, and so on. Moreover, I recommend the use of critical multicultural analysis for research studies on ethnoregional and ethnic groups in the genres of nonfiction books which is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Since my study focuses on books with young characters of ethnoregional and ethnic groups as main characters, it is also worthwhile for future research to pay attention to the young ethnoregional and ethnic characters who have minor roles in the 15 selected books in my text collection and other young adult books that do not have ethnoregional and ethnic groups as main characters. It is important to learn more about how the young supporting characters are represented in those books. What are they doing or not doing, what are they saying or not saying, or whether they are only in the background of the story. The analysis of these representations will offer more insights into power dynamics in Thai society.

Implications for Theory

Most researchers need tools to guide their understanding of concepts before doing the analysis in their studies. Most of the theories that are employed in my study thus offer insights into some major concepts which allow me to view them differently.

Prior to this study, I viewed “power” as “ability to control people and events” (Cambridge Dictionary Online, 2019) which is the primary or literal meaning of the term found in any dictionary. When I perceived “power” as “control,” I almost always associated it with the term “authority.” Foucault’s theory of power helped me expand my understanding of the term, especially, in social sciences and politics. When I realize that “power” is something not possessed, and that everyone can exercise it, my perception of the term “power” completely changed. The notion of who exercises power and how it is exercised within discourses is important because it helps us better understand the social structure of our world. If power is only exercised by authorities and colluders without any power of resistance or agency being exercised, it makes it very difficult for us to fight for social justice.

As Foucault's theory of power connects me to critical multicultural analysis which I apply as the analytical tool in my study, it is imperative that I present what I have learned from the use of this tool as it has not been discussed in Botelho (2004) and Botelho and Rudman (2009).

My critical multicultural analysis of the text collection reveals some interesting findings about the two positions of power continuum: collusion and resistance. In terms of collusive power, my analysis reveals that some people may be aware of collusive power, but still collude as a way of survival. By this, collusion is not considered as a way to support the dominant power because those who fall in this situation suffer enough from their oppression. If only they had other options, they would not want to be in this difficult situation. Regarding resistive power, my analysis indicates that some people use force as a way to demonstrate power of resistance. Though resorting to violence might not be acceptable as an appropriate way to resist, it might be the only way that some people can think of in a specific situation. The use of critical multicultural analysis to examine the characters' exercise of power thus provides me with the opportunity to learn more about the way a person chooses to exercise his/her power when he/she has to handle such situations.

The difference between "race" and "ethnicity" is another important concept that I need to pay close attention to since my study examines the power relations of ethnicity, class, and gender instead of race, class, and gender given the ethnic diversity in Thailand. Prior to this study, my understanding of the concepts of race and ethnicity was not clear as it is quite common to see these two terms used interchangeably. Thus, better understanding of these two concepts helps me to figure out how race and ethnicity, as social constructs, are distinct from one another and work together. The theory of race and ethnicity reveal that while race is usually seen as biological,

referring to the physical characteristics of a person, ethnicity is associated to a person's cultural and historical identity. Both race and ethnicity are not fixed. As a result, racial and ethnic categorization differ from one society to another.

Based on these theoretical tools, Thai people are diverse in terms of ethnicity rather than race because the ethnoregional and ethnic groups in the country have their own cultural characteristics such as language, religion, and customs. However, some groups might have darker skin tones than others.

At this point, my analysis challenges the notion of cultural authenticity which I discuss in my literature review in Chapter 2. Since both ethnicity and race are tangled and complex, it is absolutely impossible to talk about ethnicity without race or vice versa. As a consequence, a pure representation of cultural experience based on race or ethnicity alone is culturally inauthentic. Andersen (1999) points out that the focusing on ethnicity without paying attention to race is a risk because we will see ethnicity in terms of culture and overlook the reality of social structure which race remains a major part of. By this, the concept of ethnicity might shift public attention from uncomfortable topics regarding racism to more comfortable topics of cultural differences and ethnic identity.

Within the Thai context, where most people have been assimilated into the dominant culture and are expected to possess Thainess, its ethnic diversity needs to be recognized. Ethnicity might be a way to avoid talking about race in this country; however, we need to consider race alongside ethnicity in the Thai context because they work together as both people's physical attributes and cultural practices are ever-present.

Implications for Teaching

Since books about ethnic minorities written in both Thai and other world languages are not the main focus that most educators use to teach in the classrooms,

and few of them are chosen as the outside readings for students, this study encourages both classroom teachers and teacher educators to include culturally diverse collections of books in the curriculum. Moreover, as teaching English and American literature in Thailand is based mostly on the literary approach which pays more attention on the aesthetic aspects of the text such as the plot, characters and characterizations, setting, theme, and figurative language, this study provides insight into how teachers can use literature to help students develop critical multicultural practices and insights. The inclusion of cultural diversity in literature into the curriculum draws the students' attention to consider *what to read*, while critical multicultural analysis suggests *how to read* critically to examine the power relations represented in the texts. Thus, both the *what* and the *how* need to be considered for the study of children's and young adult literature for classroom learning. (Botelho & Rudman, 2009).

Due to my teaching experience as mentioned in Chapter 1, teaching English and American literature based on the literary approach is still needed to help the students who are unfamiliar in literature learn more about the basic literary elements. However, more courses of literature are required to help students learn more about social diversity in this world. What I have learned from the courses that I took for my doctoral study as well as this dissertation project inspire me to include at least two more courses in the curriculum of my department after I resume work in Thailand. I think that my students need a literature course that allows them to learn more about culturally diverse groups and a course that focuses on multiple genres and how they shape stories and how the information gets represented. Critical multicultural analysis can be applied to empower my students to critically engage with texts for social justice. This dissertation thus makes a great contribution to my teaching and students.

Implications for Publishing

Due to a dearth in children's and young adult books about ethnoregional and ethnic groups as shown in my overview findings, people involved in producing texts for young readers should be encouraged to produce more books about these groups of people.

Due to the fact that books that depict some specific ethnic groups are very rare or even do not exist, authors who are nonmembers of those cultural groups should be inspired to write about them by engaging in systematic research to learn more about the ethnic communities they represent. By this I mean cultural authenticity and authority of the authors should not be issues that prevent outsider authors from writing about cultural groups that they do not belong to. More importantly, authors should be motivated to create books that not only portray ethnoregional and ethnic groups' ways of life, but also represent the power relations of ethnicity, class, and gender to empower young readers to engage in social justice. Moreover, authors should write more books that depict young adult characters who exercise agency. Additionally, the authors in the field of children's literature need to be motivated to write books that portray other diverse populations. For example, books that depict people with disabilities are very rare while books about LGBTQ people are even fewer in number despite the fact that the LGBTQ community is increasing in Thailand.

Since publishing houses play a key role in the publishing process, they are supposed to respond to the rarity of books about diverse populations by attracting good authors to write more books that depict diverse cultural groups. Moreover, they are expected to publish those books at affordable prices so that young readers have the purchasing power to buy them.

The Publishers and Booksellers Association of Thailand (PUBAT) should play a more significant role in promoting the publication of books that depict those diverse cultural groups. Since this association is responsible for organizing the annual national book fair in Bangkok and provincial book fairs in other big cities across the country, it can help promote those books to young readers as well as empower them to engage with critical reading.

In addition, government agencies, like the Office of the Basic Education Commission under the Ministry of Education, can help promote books that represent diverse cultural groups to young readers by including more books on the list of external reading in order that the teachers can assign their students to read them.

One of librarians' duties is to choose books for libraries, they can also help promote books about diverse populations by including more books in the libraries' diverse collection. Moreover, they can help promote these books to young readers by connecting them to the resources and materials about social diversity.

Furthermore, literary awards for books that depict diverse cultural groups should be established to attract authors to interested in writing more books about these communities. Since literary awards can influence book sales to some degree, the establishment of book awards that specifically depict diverse populations in Thai society may also help inspire young readers to read them.

Concluding Thoughts

Books for young readers can be read and analyzed using different approaches such as a literary approach, feminist approach, reader response approach, or multicultural approach, to name a few. Critical multicultural analysis offers another new experience to read books for young adults as it demands that the reader look at the power relations of race, ethnicity, class, and gender, as in this study, through a

multi-layered lens. Building on Foucault's theory of power, critical multicultural analysis supports the reading of how power is exercised, who exercises it, and on whom. To answer these questions, the social processes of the characters need to be considered alongside with the analysis of the genre (s), language use, focalization of the text, closure of story, and historical and sociopolitical contexts that have had a hold on the texts' construction in the first place.

Reading Thai young adult realistic fiction about ethnoregional and ethnic groups with a critical multicultural lens allowed me to unmask the embedded power relations in stories that were written for young Thai readers. Simply reading these Thai texts as realistic fiction might let the young Thai readers learn more about the lived experiences of the ethnoregional and ethnic groups in their own country. As the genre shapes the readers' expectations and responses to the text (Botelho & Rudman, 2009), however; the genre of realistic fiction might limit the meaning that the readers make with those texts because they might assume that everything written in the texts is plausible. Thus, the realistic portrayal of any cultural group alone is not enough to understand children's literature as a historical and cultural product. It is also important to critically analyze the representation of power relations in children's and young adult literature. The critical analysis of the representation of power relations in those books provides insight into how the dominant ideologies about ethnicity, class, and gender are embedded in Thai society. The critical analysis also creates a space to consider ways of resisting hegemonic relations in those stories as well as in Thai society.

It is noteworthy to mention that the findings which revealed that few characters in the selected books exercise power of agency are somewhat relevant to Shannon's (1986) study which examines the social perspective of 30 random samples of young

American's favorite books. The results in this study show that most of the sample books present an individualist social perspective which focuses mainly on the characters' concern with self-development, personal emotion, self-reliance, privacy, and competition; none of the books portrays a collective perspective which emphasizes the characters' interest in the issues of social development, community services, cooperation toward shared goals, community, and mutual prosperity; and only a single book presents the main character with a balanced social perspective who is an individualist with a collectivist conscience. As stated by Kohl (1995), radical stories, which involve collective action that is centered on an issue of social or economic justice, are needed to empower young readers to make a better world. The findings of my study as well as Shannon's suggest there is a small number of books published in Thailand and in the United States that have young characters taking action for social change. It is imperative that authors, educators, publishers, parents, and the young people themselves do not overlook the crucial roles of radical storylines and help increase the quantity of good books that encourage children and young adult readers to think about solidarity, cooperation, group struggle, and other collective actions.

Young people should be encouraged to read books critically in order to help them understand the power relations in storylines and the microinteractions between characters. This understanding is important because it can empower young readers to critically engage for social justice. Close reading as the main concept of New Criticism, in many ways, reproduces power relations because it ignores the historical and sociopolitical aspects of production and reception, which need to be considered to create a space for social re/construction.

APPENDIX A

PUBLISHING PRACTICES

TITLE	AUTHOR	FIRST YEAR OF PUBLICATION	ETHNOREGIONAL/ETHNIC GROUP	MAIN CHARACTER'S NAME AND GENDER	AWARDS
<i>Hupkhao Saengtawan</i> (<i>The Valley of Sunlight</i>)	Phibunsak Lakhonphon	1976	Tai Yai (Shan)	La Bun/Female	
<i>Luk Isan</i> (<i>A Child of the Northeast</i>)	Khamphun Bunthawi	1976	Northeastern Thai (Isan)	Khun/Male	S.E.A. Write Award 1979
<i>Thungya Si-namngoen</i> (<i>The Blue Field</i>)	Phibunsak Lakhonphon	1978	Northern Thai (Tai Yuan)	Mawi/Male	Honorary Mention Award of the National Books Development Commission, National Book Fair 1978
<i>Phisuea Lae Dokmai</i> (<i>Butterfly and Flowers</i>)	Nipphan	1978	Malay Muslim	Huyan/Male	Award of the National Book Development Commission, National Book Fair 1978
<i>Muban Apchan</i> (<i>The Village under the Moonlight</i>)	Mala Khamchan	1980	Karen	Nu Pho and Mo Nepho/ Male	Award of the National Books Development Commission 1980
<i>Dek Ban Doi</i> (<i>The Child of Ban Doi</i>)	Mala Khamchan	1981	Northern Thai (Khon Mueang)	Mongkhon /Male	

<i>Khanamnoi Klang Thungna</i> (The Little Hut in the Paddy Field)	Chamlong Fangchonchit	1981	Southern Thai	Den, Chop, and Bao/Male	Award of the National Book Development Commission, National Book Fair 1981, Award of the National Youth Bureau 1981
<i>Pono Thirak</i> (Dear Pondok)	Narongrit Sakdanarong	1981	Malay Muslim	Hasan/Male	Award of the National Cultural Commission 1981
<i>Luk pa</i> (Children of the Wild)	Mala Khamchan	1982	Karen	Yachi/Male	Award of the National Books Development Commission 1982, Award of the National Youth Bureau 1982
<i>Kham Ai</i>	Yong Yasothorn	1988	Northeastern Thai (Isan)	Kham Ai/Male	Bualuang Literary Award 1989
<i>Dek Pono</i> (Pondok Students)	Anuson Marasa	1997	Malay Muslim	Naset/Male	Final ten nominee for Ton O Grammy Publishing House Book Award 1997
<i>Mai Mae</i>	Phanumat Phumthawon	1998	Hmong	Mai Mae/Female	Honorary Mention Award of the National Book Development Commission, National Book Fair 1999

<i>Bitakka Dao Duang Nan Rawang Nam Kap Fa (Bitakka: That Star between the Sea and the Sky)</i>	Kaya Klathale	2004	Urak Lawoi	Bitakka/Male	Rakluke Award 2006
<i>Kiao Bao Na Chok (The Overseas Vietnamese of Na Chok)</i>	Phanumat Phumthawon	2004	Vietnamese Refugee	Khui/Male	Final ten nominee for the S.E.A. Write Award 2006
<i>Phisuea Lae Sairung (The Butterfly and the Rainbow)</i>	Yip Phanchan	2006	Maniq	Boe La/Male	Honorary Mention Award of the Green Globe Institute 2006

APPENDIX B

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SELECTED BOOKS

Anuson Marasa. (1999). *Dek pono* [The Pondok students]. (2nd ed.). Bangkok: Ton O.

The book tells about Naset, a 12-year-old Muslim boy and other Muslim students in a Pondok school, which is a traditional place that provides Islamic studies for Malay Muslims in Southern Thailand.

Chamlong Fangchonchit (2013). *Khanamnoi klang thungna* [The little hut in the paddy field]. (9th ed.). Bangkok: Ban Maeo.

The story depicts the life of three close friends -- Den, Chop, and Bao -- and their families' way of life in the countryside of Nakhon Si Thammarat Province in Southern Thailand.

Kaya Klatale. (2004). *Bi-takk: Dao duang nan rawang nam kab fa* [Bi-takka: That star between the sea and the sky]. (2nd ed.). Bangkok: Foundation for Children.

Bitakka Dao Duang Nan Rawang Nam Kap Fa tells the story of an Urak Lawoi boy, *Bitakka*, and his family. The Urak Lawoi or people of the sea live on the islands off the coastal provinces along the Andaman Sea in the Southern region of Thailand.

Khamphun Bhunthawi. (2013). *Luk Isan* [A child of the Northeast] Bangkok: Pouyzian Publication.

This autobiographical novel tells the everyday experiences of a young boy, Khun, in the Northeastern Thailand during the 1930s. This novel won Thailand's foremost literary prize, the Southeast Asian Writers Award (S.E.A. Write Award) in 1979.

Mala Khamchan. (2008). *Luk pa* [Children of the wild]. (13th ed.). Bangkok: Kledt Thai.

This is the story of two youth characters who are connected to one another in spite of their different ethnicity and socioeconomic status. Mueangkham, a Northern Thai boy, befriends Yachi, a Karen boy after verbally and physically bullying him.

Mala Khamchan. (2014). *Dek Ban Doi* [A child of Ban Doi]. (6th ed.). Bangkok: Kledt Thai.

This book was inspired by the author's childhood experience between 1957 and 1969 in his hometown in Ban Doi in Northern Thailand. It is a record of Ban Doi's geographical features and social life which is told through Mongkhon, a main character of the story.

Mala Kanchan. (2014). *Muban Apchan* [The village under the moonlight]. (12th ed.). Bangkok: Kledt Thai.

Muban Apchan is the story of two Karen boys, Nu Pho and Mo Ngepho, and their community who live in the mountains of Northern Thailand.

Narongrit Sakdanarong. (1996). *Pono Thirak* [Dear Pondok]. (5th ed.). Bangkok: Ton O Grammy.

This is another book that tells a story of Muslim students at a Pondok school in Southern Thailand. Hasun, the main character of the story, disagrees with the traditional practices at the school which seriously affect his life.

Nipphan. (2000). *Phisuea lae dokmai* [Butterfly and flowers]. (18th ed.). Bangkok: Butterflybook.

This coming-of-age story is about a kind-hearted Muslim teenager in Southern Thailand, Huyan, who does his best to help his family survive. It is one of the most successful Thai young adult fiction books to ever be published.

Phanumat Phumthawon. (2003). *Kiao bao Na Chok* [The overseas Vietnamese of Na Chok]. Bangkok: Mingmit.

The book was inspired by the true story of Vietnamese refugees who fled from their home country to live in *Ban Na Chok* (Na Chok Village) in Nakhon Phanom Province due to the political crisis after World War II. It tells about Kwui and his family who encounter difficulties due to their non-citizen status.

Phanumat Phumthawon. (2004). *Mai mae*. Bangkok: Mingmit.

Mai Mae is a 13-year-old Hmong girl who lives with her adoptive parents in a village, referred to as, Phu Wi Wia, on a mountain in Northern Thailand. As the school in her village was closed, she reopens it, and teaches the Hmong children herself.

Phibunsak Lakhonphon. (2000). *Thungya si-namngoen* [The blue field]. (3rd ed.). Bangkok: Kledt Thai.

This book depicts Mawi, a Tai Yuan boy, and his Karen friends living in villages in Northern Thailand. These young boys are provided with the opportunity to have access to education, but experience at school is not good for them

Phibunsak Lakhonphon. (2001). *Hupkhao saengtawan* [The valley of sunlight]. (4th ed.). Bangkok: Kledt Thai.

Hupkhao Saengtawan is a book about a Tai Yai girl, La Bun, her teacher, and her community in Mae Hong Son Province in Northern Thailand. The author wrote this book based on his teaching experience at a small school situated in a Tai Yai village in Mae Hon Song Province.

Yip Phanchan. (2016). *Phisuea lae sairung* [Butterfly and the rainbow]. Bangkok: Sinlapa Wannakam.

This book is about Boe La and his Maniq community living in a forest of the southern province of Thailand. Boe La is different from other Maniq, including his siblings, since he is the first Maniq who went to school. Also, he has the opportunity to work in town and in Bangkok.

Yong Yasothorn. (2012). *Kham ai*. (7th ed.). Bangkok: Ming Mit.

This is another book that is about the life of Northeastern or Isan people's way of life through Kham Ai, a 12-year-old boy.

APPENDIX C

CHILDREN'S BOOK AWARDS IN THAILAND

There are a number of book awards in Thailand, but few of them were specifically established to be given to writers of children's and young adult books. Mostly, prizes for children's and young adult books are part of awards for adult books which have been founded by both state agencies and publishers. The significant awards given for children's and young adult books are as follows:

Book Award of the National Book Development Commission

This award was founded in 1972 which was proclaimed International Book Year by UNESCO. Thailand Library Association was assigned to organize the national book fair and offer the award to children's and young adult books. A year later, the National Book Development Commission under the Center of Book Development Ministry of Education was appointed to organize the fair and the award. In 2003, after the reorganization of government agencies, the Office of the Basic Education Commission under the Ministry of Education was assigned to be responsible for the national book fair and book award offering. The award is referred to with three different names including the award of National Book Fair, Book Award of the National Book Development Commission, and Book Award of the Office of the Basic Education Commission. The prizes are given to books in the category of poetry, fiction, nonfiction, and children's and young adult literature.

Naiin Award

This award has been presented since 1999 by Amarin Printing & Publishing Public Company Limited for the six award categories: nonfiction, poetry, novel, short story, picture books, and young adult literature.

Wankaew Award

This award was founded in 2001 by Nanmeebook Publishing. Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn has permitted the founder to use her pen name *Wankaew* to name the award. The prizes are given to the category of moral picture story, picture book with knowledge, and young adult fiction and nonfiction.

7 Book Award

7 Book Award was instituted in 2004 by CP All Public Company Limited. The prizes are given in seven categories: poetry, novel, comic book, short story collection, young adult book, nonfiction, and books created by young author.

Some awards given by state agencies such as the National Youth Bureau and National Cultural Commission no longer exist due to the reorganization of the government agencies. Rakluke Award founded in 2003 by a child care magazine entitled *Rakluke* which presented prizes for both fiction and nonfiction books for children and adolescents no longer exists because the magazine went out of print.

APPENDIX D

CHILDREN'S BOOK PUBLISHERS IN THAILAND

There is a small number of publishers in Thailand that specifically publish books for children and young adults. I include those on the list here in the order of their establishment.

Nanmeebooks Company Limited

www.nanmeebooks.com/about_us_en/

Nanmeebooks was developed from a small Chinese book store founded by Thongkasem Suputtipong (Tang Sekkim), a Chinese immigrant from Southern China, in 1928. Currently, its main products include books for children from 0 to 8 years (tales with knowledge, workbooks), books for youth 9 to 18 years (comics, knowledge supplements, youth literature), books for adults 18 years and over (novels, health, management, self-improvement), and books for all ages (royal works, ncyclopedias, dictionaries, languages).

Vibulkij Publishing Group

<http://www.vdigi.net/>

Founded in 1951, Vibulkij Publishing Group is very well known among readers as one of the biggest publishers of Japanese comic books translated into Thai.

Praew Children's Books, Praew Juvenile Books, and Amarin Comics

<https://amarin.co.th/>

Praew Children's Books, Praew Juvenile Books, and Amarin Comics are part of Amarin Printing and Publishing Public Company Limited which was founded by Chukiat Utakapan. The company began its business by publishing a magazine entitled *Baan Lae Suan* (House & Garden) in 1976. Later, it expanded its publishing business to

meet several different groups of audiences' needs. Praew Children's Books focuses on publishing tales and knowledge supplements and skill improvement books for children aged 0 to 8 years. Praew Juvenile Books publishes both Thai and translated fiction books for young Thai readers. Amarin Comics' major products are comic books, picture books, and non-fiction books, targeted to first grader readers and up.

Baby Gang Publishing House

<http://www.saengdao.com/>

This publishing house is part of Saengdao Publishing House Co., Ltd which was established by Charun Homtientong in 1987. Baby Gang's main products are picture tales that promote morals to children as well as picture books on Buddhism.

Siam Inter Multimedia Public Company Limited

<http://www.smm.co.th>

Siam Inter Multimedia Public Company Limited was established in 1990 as a publisher and bookseller of Japanese comic books translated into Thai. Later, the company also started publishing translated comic books from China, Korea, and the United States.

Jamsai Publishing Company Limited

<https://www.jamsai.com/>

Jamsai Publishing Company Limited was founded in 2001 by aiming to publish books for new generation youths. Later, the company also started targeting the young female readers. Currently, the company publishes three categories of books including 1) contemporary love stories for female readers aged 18 and up, 2) love series for teen readers aged 10 to 24, and 3) translated Chinese and Taiwanese period love stories.

Foundation for Children Publishing House

<https://www.ffc.or.th/home/>

This publishing house is part of Foundation For Children (FFC), a non-profit and non-governmental organization helping children in Thailand, founded in 1978 and based in Bangkok. This publishing house has been established to produce creative media for children. The main products of this publishing house include tales, picture books, fiction books, and parenting books for raising children.

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